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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Seeking Summit To Discuss Israeli 'Siege'

NC0204075296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2038 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—Ambassador Sa'id Kamal, Arab League assistant secretary general for Palestinian affairs, has stated that there is a united Arab stance on the Israeli siege on the Palestinian people.

He said in press statements today that the Arab League is hoping to convene an Arab summit involving the countries that are directly concerned with peace to look into the dangerous issue of the policy of collective punishment that the Israeli occupation authorities are applying against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. He called for taking a group stance against the policy of stalling and delay the various tracks of the peace process.

Ambassador Sa'id Kamal clarified that the policy of closure and siege will remain in force over the self-rule areas, according to reports and information available to the Palestinian administration from inside the occupied territories and Israel itself, until after the Israeli elections. The pretext for this is the security situation and the upcoming elections in Israel, which have nothing to do with the peace process Israel embarked on with the Arab countries.

The Arab League assistant secretary general added that Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has entrusted the head of the League mission in New York, Ambassador Mahmud Abu-al-Nasr, to hold extensive contacts with the Arab group so that the group will hold contacts with the Security Council's permanent members to highlight the dangers of the policy of collective punishment, closure, and siege imposed on the Palestinian people, its direct threats to the peace process, and the possibility of the process failing. He said that 'Abd-al-Majid is currently holding contacts with UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the OAU, and the Nonaligned Movement on this issue.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Meeting To Discuss Israeli Nuclear Leak

NC0104190296 Cairo MENA in English 1745 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, April 1st (MENA)—The Arab League Council is to hold an emergency session next week at the permanent representatives level at a request of the state of Palestine to discuss the issue of nuclear leakage of Israeli Dimona reactor in Negev Desert.

The Palestinian memorandum circulated among Arab representatives said that the Israeli Dimona reactor has constituted a serious danger regarding Arab security, water and environment, especially its effects on the Palestinian people.

The memorandum referred to a secret document released on March 24 by the Israeli television which warned against the hazards of the reactor and the possibility that a nuclear catastrophe would happen if the region was hit by an earthquake.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Yemeni President, Arab League Chief Discuss Island Dispute

NC3003205896 Cairo MENA in English 2000 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 30—(MENA)—Visiting Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih met here today with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid.

The Arab League chief told reporters after the meeting that he informed President Salih that the Arab League was keen that a peaceful settlement be reached for the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Red Sea island of al-Hanish. 'Abd-al-Majid expressed support of the objective French mediation aimed at finding a peaceful solution for the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute.

The Arab League chief reiterated the League's thanks for Egypt and Ethiopia for their constructive efforts to settle the dispute between the two sisterly countries.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that he listened to the viewpoint of President Salih regarding Arab conditions in general and the situation in the Red Sea in particular. The League secretary general appealed to Yemen and Eritrea to respond to good offices exerted in this respect in order to maintain security and stability in the Red Sea region.

'Abd-al-Majid said that the settlement of disputes through peaceful means is recommended by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the Arab League.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 22 Mar

NC2903133296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 22 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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CONTENTS:

1. Libya Insists on Pilgrims' Travel Aboard National Airline
2. Efforts To Form Arab Front Opposed to Egypt Summit Outcome
3. Turkey Proposes Military Alliance Against Islamic Movements
4. Labor Party Official Attacks Arab Participants of Summit
5. Report on 'Arafat's Campaign on Islamists After Summit
6. Indonesian Muslim Scholar on 'Proselytization' Efforts
7. Writer Calls For Accord Between Government, Islamic Groups

LIBYA INSISTS ON PILGRIMS' TRAVEL ABOARD NATIONAL AIRLINE

A 200-word report on pages 1 and 8 by Salah Bidaywi says Libya has refused to transport its pilgrims aboard any Arab or foreign airline. It adds that Libya "insisted on transporting Libyan pilgrims directly from its territories aboard the Libyan national airline planes. The report says Libya informed three Arab countries — Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia — of this measure.

The newspaper attributes this information to "a diplomatic source in Cairo" in a statement to AL-SHA'B. The source says Libya learned that Washington "had warned the three Arab countries of the danger of their permission to Libyan airplanes to fly over or land in their territories and that U.S. aircraft will force the Libyan planes to return implementing Security Council resolutions."

The report notes that these developments took place while Arab labor ministers issued a resolution supporting Libya in "its legitimate request to remove the international blockade imposed on it."

EFFORTS TO FORM ARAB FRONT OPPOSED TO EGYPT SUMMIT OUTCOME

A 540-word report on page 1 filed by Mahmud Bakri discusses U.S.-Israeli coordination following the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, noting the signing of a memo of understanding on military technology.

It adds: "Reports indicate that reciprocal attempts are under way to create an Arab front to reject the results of the Sharm al-Shaykh Summit, to remove the U.S. influence over the region, and to resist all forms of Israel's economic ties with Arab countries."

The report continues: "Reports confirm that contacts were held among Libyan revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Sudanese leader 'Umar al-Bashir, in addition to contacts made with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. These contacts were aimed at the possibility of avoiding any potential effect by the Sharm al-Shaykh conference on the region. The conference represented a catastrophe because it allowed international forces to interfere in the Arab countries' internal affairs on the pretext of fighting terrorism."

The report says that the current idea is to form a unified Arab front made up of these countries. If agreement to form such a front is reached, the report adds, an invitation is expected to convene a summit among these countries' leaders and, according to information, Tripoli is the candidate to host the summit.

The report notes that such a summit or front is not designed against Egypt and that it is "primarily aimed against the foreign countries that are trying to encroach on these countries' sovereignty over their territories."

TURKEY PROPOSES MILITARY ALLIANCE AGAINST ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS

A 370-word report on pages 1 and 8, filed by Rabi' Shahin, discusses the aims of Turkish President Demirel's recent visit to Egypt. The report, headlined "Turkey Proposes a Secular Military Alliance Against Islamic Movements", says: "AL-SHA'B has learned that there are "several aims" behind the Turkish president's visit to Cairo."

Topping the agenda of talks Demirel held in Cairo, the report adds, was a call to set up a military alliance among secular countries in the face of Islamic movements, "which the Turkish president viewed as the biggest and most dangerous source of threat to the future and security of these countries' regimes."

The report says the Turkish president called for coordination among "secular governments" and a military alliance whose "nucleus" will be Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, and Israel.

Touching on Turkey's differences with its Arab neighbors over water, the report says: "AL-SHA'B has learned that Cairo rejected Turkey's efforts to escalate the differences and advised that the water problem should be settled through a political dialogue with Syria and Iraq. Egypt is expected to mediate in this respect. The paper also learned that Demirel's proposal to form a military alliance was met with strong Egyptian reservation. Cairo noted that the Arab countries are linked with a military pact and that such a move will destroy reconciliation efforts and increase division in the Arab region which will achieve the goals and interests of Israel and other big powers."

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The report adds: "Cairo did not object to cooperation on confronting extremist movements, exchanging information, and arresting wanted people." The report also notes that the Turkish president expressed fear of "growing Islamic movements in a number of Arab countries."

LABOR PARTY OFFICIAL ATTACKS ARAB PARTICIPANTS OF SUMMIT

Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn writes an approximately 1,700-word article on page 5 drawing a parallel between an Arab summit held in 1970 in support of the Palestinian resistance and its defending its right to fight "its enemies" and the recent Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

He says "the U.S.-backed Israeli army" carried out repression against Palestinians, killed people, demolished homes, and imposed collective punishment. He adds that through these acts the Israeli army is not challenging the Palestinians alone, "but all the Arabs, led by Egypt." He says the blockade is not imposed on Gaza alone, but on Egypt, "trucks and goods from which are banned from entering" Gaza.

He asks: "Have Arab and Muslim leaders called for discussing the situation for a mere protest?" He answers: No. Our leaders can no longer convene a summit conference. The United States and Israel have tied the hands of the hawks, Iran, Iraq, and Libya, which refuse to surrender, and Syria will soon join them. Our leaders are not permitted to meet these steadfast hawks. But what about those who support the peace process? They too are not allowed to meet, except in the presence of the United States and Israel. So the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was held.

Toward the end of his article, he says: "If some Arab regimes have conceded this drawback and sided with the enemies in humiliation, then under this class of ruler lies a burning fire. God's martyrdom-seeking soldiers will not be deterred by the deceit of those who will meet in Washington." He adds: "Soon, God willing, we will see the spread of the spirit of resistance everywhere. God willing, we will soon see a new era when the siege of the hawks will be broken, the scale will be balanced, and Islam's banner will fly."

REPORT ON 'ARAFAT'S CAMPAIGN ON ISLAMISTS AFTER SUMMIT

In an approximately 1,000-word article on page 7, the author, Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah, discusses the outcome of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. He says that following the summit the Israeli inner cabinet met "last Wednesday" [13 March] in the presence of U.S. President Clinton and senior CIA and FBI officials and endorsed "several serious resolutions." He adds that Israeli newspapers reported that the joint Israeli-U.S. meeting "endorsed a detailed plan to assassinate" Hamas and al-Jihad leaders.

As a result of the summit, the writer says, Arab countries, namely Gulf states, received "direct requests, not only from U.S. intelligence, but also from Israeli security agencies"—during and after Peres' talks in Sharm al-Shaykh with leaders of these countries—to halt political and financial support for Hamas. These countries were asked to prevent alms money donated by people in the Gulf from reaching Palestine.

The writer adds: "The Palestinian president did not hesitate to implement any request by the Israelis or the Americans against Islamic forces. He even entered a tripartite security pact with them on intelligence cooperation against Islamic movements."

What is strange, the report says, is that the Israelis complained against attacks on their country from mosque pulpits in Arab countries. The Israelis regarded it as incitement to commit terrorism and demanded that it be banned, the report adds.

INDONESIAN MUSLIM SCHOLAR ON 'PROSELYTIZATION' EFFORTS

Page 9 carries an approximately 1,400-word interview with an Indonesian Muslim scholar, Fu'ad Fakhr-al-Din, on the status of Islam in his country. The interviewer is unidentified.

Asked about missionary activities, the interviewee says Christianity "penetrated our country through proselytization campaigns" that extend financial aid to poor Muslims. He adds that one of the "means of Christianization" is "temptation" through money and that Western countries and the Vatican provide funds toward this effort.

WRITER CALLS FOR ACCORD BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, ISLAMIC GROUPS

In a 1,500-word article on the same page, Hilmi Muhammad al-Qa'ud advocates reconciliation between the government and opposition groups, asserting that there are foreign plans against Egypt.

He says: "Weakening Egypt has been the primary goal of evil international forces led by the United States and the Jews. Their aim is to take exclusive control of other Islamic countries by destroying them, plundering their wealth, and dominating their political and strategic capabilities."

He says it is time the authorities and the [Islamic] groups realized that reciprocal violence and feuds will not achieve victory for one over the other. The only loser,

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he adds, is the people and the only winner international and domestic evil forces.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 26 Mar

NC3003195296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 26 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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6. Detained Jordanian Islamist Contests By-Election
7. U.S. State Department Human Rights Report Detailed
8. MB General Guide Criticizes Peacemakers Summit
9. Tributes Paid to Deceased Islamic Scholars
10. Students Expelled for Reading Koran in Stadium
11. Female Islamist Preacher Arrested
12. Government Urged To Improve Relations With Sudan

LEAD STORY VIEWS ONSLAUGHT ON ARAB, ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

The main story in this edition is an 800-word unattributed article on pages 1 and 8 on what it terms the "intensifying siege of a number of Arab and Islamic countries," the calls to "escalate the hostile measures against Iran and the Islamic movements," and the moves to "impose a blockade of Sudan," adding that these measures coincide with the escalating "Zionist aggression against the Palestinian people inside the occupied territories and the continued daily attacks in occupied south Lebanon. All this puts all Muslim people under a total siege, suffering the constant aggression that goes along with the outcome of the recent Sharm al-Shaykh summit. the summit paved the way for Israeli thuggery under direct U.S. protection, as confirmed by President Bill Clinton during his recent visit to Israel and by the dangerous agreements signed to support the Zionist entity."

The article reviews the U.S. call to the UN Security Council to step up the economic sanctions imposed on Libya, the U.S. efforts to derail the UN-Iraqi talks on the sale of Iraqi oil to buy food and medicine, and the U.S. House of Representatives' International Relations Committee's resolution advocating a law to isolate Iran economically and force international companies to choose between their vast interests in the United States and their interests in Iran. The report then notes that the deadline set by the Security Council for Sudan to hand over the three persons accused of attempting to assassinate President Husni Mubarak has almost arrived. The Security Council is expected "to impose an unjust embargo on Sudan, thus putting it together with Libya and Iraq and gravely endangering the Sudanese people's interests." The article concludes by saying that if this embargo is imposed "Egypt itself will also suffer economically, since it will find itself caught between two besieged Arab countries, one in the west (Libya), and the other in the south (Sudan)."

AL-SHA'B JOURNALIST FREED IN SLANDER CASE

A 70-word unattributed report on page 1 says that AL-SHA'B's managing editor, Mahmud Bakri, was released by order of the State Security prosecutor general in the slander case filed against him by former Awqaf Minister Muhammad Mahjub.

LAWYERS DEMAND RIGHT TO VISIT DETAINED MB MEMBERS

A 60-word report by Khalid Yunus on page 1 says that three defense lawyers have requested to be allowed to visit the defendants in what is known as the al-Fayyum Muslim Brotherhood [MB] case. The request was made after they and the defendants' families were forbidden to visit the defendants a week earlier.

ISLAMIST INSTITUTES LAWSUIT AGAINST TRAVEL BAN

Another 60-word unattributed report on page 1 says that Islamic preacher Shaykh Hafiz Salamah has filed a law suit against the interior minister demanding repeal of the latter's decision to ban him from travelling, because this decision violates the Constitution and the law.

STUDENTS DISMAYED BY SEARCH OF THEIR ROOMS

A 120-word report by Tariq 'Abd-al-Hamid on pages 1 and 8 deals with "a feeling of dismay" sweeping the students of Cairo University following the decision by the administration to carry out periodic searches of their rooms and forbid them from assembling outside their rooms. It also notes that the "administration recorded the names of students who were absent from the student city on the night the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was held; it did so in implementation of police orders." The report also claims that a number of Islamist students were interrogated when they tried to preach in city mosques.

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DETAINED JORDANIAN ISLAMIST CONTESTS BY-ELECTION

An unattributed 80-word report on page 1 says that imprisoned Jordanian Islamist Layth Shubaylat has decided to run in a by-election.

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT DETAILED

On page 3 Al-SHA'B publishes without comment the 5,000-word U.S. State Department 1995 report on human rights violations in Egypt.

MB GENERAL GUIDE CRITICIZES PEACEMAKERS SUMMIT

On page 5 is published a 1,500-word article Muslim Brotherhood General Guide Mustafa Mashhur entitled "Is This the Peace, O Peacemaker?"

TRIBUTES PAID TO DECEASED ISLAMIC SCHOLARS

A 3,000-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad on page 6 highlights the speeches by various leading figures at a meeting held at the Young Men's Muslim Association headquarters in Cairo to commemorate the late Islamic thinker and scholar Shaykh Muhammad al-Ghazali. The speakers, which included Mufti Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi and Muslim Brotherhood General Guide Mustafa Mashhur, spoke of the deceased scholar's virtues, contributions to Islamic thinking, and defense of right and justice.

A 400-word column by Ahmad al-Siyufi on the same page pays tribute to Shaykh Dr. al-Ghazali and also to the late Islamic thinker Khalid Muhammad Khalid and the late al-Azhar Imam Shaykh Jad-al-Haqq 'Ali Jad-al-Haqq. The writer says that while other Islamic countries were mourning and eulogizing the three deceased Islamic thinkers, Egypt and its media were preoccupied with celebrating the anniversary of the death of a pop singer. He concludes by saying that "ignoring the two shaykhs is a crime by any standard." He demands that those responsible must be punished "to restore the nation's confidence in this controlled media, which only tries to satisfy the whims of persons who represent only themselves."

In his 400-word column on page 8, columnist Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus also pays tribute to Shaykh al-Ghazali and views his stands on various issues.

STUDENTS EXPELLED FOR READING KORAN IN STADIUM

An 80-word report by Tariq 'Abd-al-Hamid on page 8 says that the dean of the Social Services College in Hulwan expelled eight students for two weeks for reading the Koran in the college stadium at the request of the students. It adds that the expelled students filed a case with the Administrative Court to repeal this decision.

FEMALE ISLAMIST PREACHER ARRESTED

An unattributed 30-word report on page 8 says that State Security Intelligence officers arrested Islamic preacher Mrs. Amal Kamal 'Abd-al-Wahhab in Port Said in early March and canceled her weekly lesson for girls in the city's al-Huda al-Nabawi Mosque.

GOVERNMENT URGED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH SUDAN

In his 5,000-word article on pages 2 and 8, Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn focuses on the turbulent history of Egyptian-Sudanese relations and the impasse they have now reached. He starts by reviewing the plight of the Arab and Islamic people and the West's attacks on it and on the Islamic awakening, citing in the cases of Libya and Iraq, the Sharm al-Shaykh summit against the "mujahidin of Palestine," the new campaign to tighten the siege of Iran, the exclusion of Turkey's Welfare Party from power, and the Israeli shelling of Lebanon.

Saying that Sudan is the next victim of this onslaught in light of the imminent economic sanctions to be imposed on it by the Security Council, the writer urges Egypt's rulers to improve relations with Sudan "not because the two countries share their water, but because of the Arab and Islamic ties that bind us to this people who live at our borders and who represent our strategic reserve." He then details at length the Labor Party's ties with Sudan, his visits to that country, and the evolution of parliamentary elections there in the past decades. His says his concern is to show that relations between the two countries must remain good regardless of the nature of the regimes that rule them.

Husayn then touches on the recent dispute resulting from the attempt on President Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa last year, citing the Ethiopian foreign minister's denial that Sudan was involved in the attempt itself. He then quotes extensively from the Sudanese Government's response to the UN secretary general's report on the issue. He also notes that "the Egyptian Government does not accuse Sudan of planning the Addis Ababa operation, but is at most accusing Sudan of giving shelter to the perpetrators after the operation." He adds that even if this is true, "Egypt should not be leading a campaign to embargo an Arab Muslim people. The Egyptian Government does not deal with the United States, Britain, Denmark, or Switzerland so harshly even when it is sure that these countries are sheltering persons it

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believes are terrorists who participated in assassination attempts, including ones against Mubarak, 'Atif Sidqi, and Hasan al-Alfi. Why this flexing of muscles and show of courage against the Sudanese people? Is it because they are weak? Is this a sense of honor, chivalry, or good morals? Why do you always find ways to reach understanding with the Zionists, the enemies of God, but find no way with Sudan's leaders, even if they are bad?"

Noting next that Egypt "is embracing the Sudanese opposition, which has declared armed struggle in all parts of Sudan," Husayn concludes that Sudan is an Arab Muslim neighbor, and good relations must be maintained with it. He advises the government to accept Arab mediation to clear the air between the two countries.

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 26 Mar

NC3003132296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 26 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Washington Meeting Urged To Address Palestinian, Israeli Terrorism
2. Awqaf Minister on Christians in Egypt, Fighting Terrorism
3. Writer Criticizes Western Double Standard in Bosnia, Palestinians
4. Islam Prospers Despite Western Plans, Extremists

WASHINGTON MEETING URGED TO ADDRESS PALESTINIAN, ISRAELI TERRORISM

A 600-word unattributed report on pages 1 and 21 under the headline "Who Will Stop Israeli Terrorism?" notes that at a meeting of Muslim ulema and Christian leaders, they urge the follow-up committee of the Sharm al-Shaykh peacemakers summit that will meet in the United States to take action to stop "Israeli terrorism" against the Palestinian people and to implement the summit resolutions fairly. They stress the need for unifying the position of Arabs and Muslims to make positive moves to stop "Israeli terrorism."

Egypt's Mufti Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi calls on the follow-up committee members to implement the Sharm al-Shaykh summit resolutions "fairly and even-handedly." He stresses that the Islamic and Arab parties should adopt a fair stance so that the Palestinian people may regain all their rights without denying any rights to the other party. He stresses the need to stop the Israeli "arbitrary and repressive measures," such as starvation, deportation, and harassment of the Palestinians, because this will lead to grave consequences.

Al-Azhar acting rector Shaykh Sa'd Sa'ud emphasizes that the Arabs are required to take a practical stand and not be content with statements. He says that the Arabs and Muslims — peoples and governments — "must unite to confront terrorism by both Arabs and Israelis." He says that terrorism in the region seeks "to torpedo peace and the efforts being made to achieve it." He says "we must stand by the governments in their efforts to strike at terrorism by both parties." He says that Israeli terrorism is a result of constant propaganda about the Jewish right to land and adds that this requires a decisive stance by the Israeli government.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Sabur Marzuq, vice president of the Higher Council of Islamic Affairs, says that as we call on the groups accused of terrorism and violence to stop their acts, we in return call on Israel to stop starving the Palestinian people and preventing them from going to work, because this will lead to acts of violence.

Commenting on the same theme and in a 550-word account on page 21 under the headline "Israel Continues Collective Punishment of the Palestinian People; The Washington Follow-up Committee Meeting Must Condemn Organized Terrorism," Ashraf Abu-al-Hawl says that despite the passage of three weeks after the latest operation in Tel Aviv by Hamas and al-Jihad to avenge the killing of Fathi al-Shaqaqi and Yahya 'Ayyash by the Israeli intelligence, and despite the passage of two weeks since the Sharm al-Shaykh peacemakers summit, the Israeli government continues its collective punishment of the Palestinian people. It closes the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, prevents Palestinians from going to work, and demolishes homes. In addition, the Israeli government is putting intense pressure on Yasir 'Arafat and the Palestinian Authority to uproot Hamas and al-Jihad members although it failed to do this itself. Israel continues this pressure on 'Arafat despite all he has done, which reached the point of threatening a civil war. He urges the follow-up committee meeting in Washington to address this situation.

A 400-word editorial on page 3 says that since Israel is trying to limit the follow-up committee meeting to discussing the Palestinian people's legitimate resistance in defense of their usurped rights, combating terrorism, and transferring of funds among terrorist groups, we call the attention of all parties that Palestinian "terrorism" is merely a reaction to the Israeli "arbitrary and repressive measures, starving, and displacing the Palestinian people." It is unreasonable to shackle the weak and let

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the strong free to practice all types of violence, terrorism, and aggression. Israel, the editorial says, must ease the suffering of the Palestinians by ending the collective punishment and stopping expropriation of land and building of settlements. The editorial urges the international community to fulfill its promises of economic, social, and political aid to the Palestinians because security and stability are closely linked to economic and social satisfaction.

AWQAF MINISTER ON CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT, FIGHTING TERRORISM

A 400-word unattributed report on page 2 says that at a meeting with over 60 German newspapers chief editors and media figures, Awqaf Minister Dr. Mahmud Hamdi Zaqzuq answered questions regarding Christians in Egypt. He stresses that Christians in Egypt are the luckiest and happiest minority in the world, enjoying all their rights and freedoms and living side by side with their Muslim brothers in one cohesive fabric. He says that isolated and individual incidents must not be interpreted as Islamic-Christian hostility. He stresses that the government is prepared for any extremist and terrorist movement because they distort Egypt's name and the progress of the sound Islamic call. He asserts that these terrorists are deviants from Islamic teachings and have nothing to do with the values and principles of Islam. Their actions, he underlines, must not be blamed on Islam. Discussing the awqaf ministry tasks, he says it seeks to revive and promote true Islamic propagation in Egypt and the world.

WRITER CRITICIZES WESTERN DOUBLE STANDARD IN BOSNIA, PALESTINIANS

In a 500-word boxed column on page 10 headlined "If Europe and the United States Are Not Ashamed," Majdi Salim compares Europe's marking of the 50th anniversary of the Nuremberg trials and the discovery of mass graves of Muslims in Bosnia. He says that the United States and the European countries showed no mercy toward the war criminals of the World War and have let Israel chase and hunt down war criminals all over the whole world until this day. He wonders about Western justice regarding the punishment of Serb and Israeli war criminals. He argues that what is happening in Bosnia and Palestine confirms once again that justice was not the objective of the civilized world in Europe and the United States or the backward Russia. Their objective was revenge and interests. He says that the whole world has seen the massacres, atrocities, and recently, the mass graves that the Serbs have perpetrated against Muslims in Bosnia but kept silent. The trials in the Balkan region are sham theatricals, he maintains. This proves the truth of the saying "if one is shameless, one will not refrain from doing anything."

ISLAM PROSPERS DESPITE WESTERN PLANS, EXTREMISTS

Jamal Salim writes a 1,500-word interview on page 20 with a Finnish woman who came to Egypt to study Islamic shari'ah at al-Azhar and later adopted Islam after deep conviction. She elaborates on her life in her native country, gives her reasons for adopting the religion, and outlines the qualities and principles that motivated her to adopt it. Salim comments saying that despite the ferocious campaigns and plans in the West against Islam and Muslims, and despite the acts of violence, terrorism, and killing committed by certain Muslims, who provide enemies of Islam with pretexts for their war, Islam, with its moderation, rationality, principles, and justice, continues to attract daily new converts in all parts of the world.

In a 350-word boxed column on the same page under the headline "Media And Islam," 'Adil Dayf claims that the Western media continues its "venomous campaign" against Islam, although Muslims are not at war with anyone and want to live in peace with everyone. He says Western media tries to associate terrorism with anything Islamic to entrench this idea in the minds of peoples around the world. He says REUTER correspondents in some Arab countries take advantage of any opportunity to dispatch reports portraying Muslims as terrorists and their goal as killing and blood shedding. He notes that a REUTER correspondent described even the Koran's teaching centers as centers for teaching principles of extremism. He argues that these correspondents ignore the fact that terrorism is an international phenomenon affecting the whole world and cites examples of acts of terrorism in the United States and other European countries. He asserts that Muslims condemn terrorism and want peace to prevail everywhere. He assails attempts to associate Islam with terrorism and urges Western media to verify their reports.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Sends Message to Arab League on 'Israeli Measures'

JN0104202196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat today sent a message to Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid on the recent developments and repercussions of the arbitrary Israeli measures against the Palestinian people.

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President 'Arafat demanded the fraternal Arab states to continue pooling their efforts to support the just and urgent Palestinian demands at all international and local forums.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Closure 'Declaration of War'

JN0104202596 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in English 1930 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President 'Arafat said Israel had declared war on the Palestinian people with its crushing closure of Palestine in a letter to the Arab League.

Collective punishment, the refusal to withdraw from Hebron, and the Israeli army's reoccupation of zones already evacuated constitute a declaration of war against the Palestinian people, he said in the letter.

The PLO's representative to the league Muhammad Subayh read the letter to journalists in which 'Arafat asked the pan-Arab body to back the Palestinian call for an immediate session of the United Nations Security Council to put an end to the closure.

Meanwhile, Deputy Secretary General Sa'id Kamal said he hoped an Arab mini-summit gathering Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians would be convened. The gathering of leaders from the countries involved in the peace process would aim to take a common stand against the collective punishment put in place by the Israeli occupation, Kamal told journalists.

'Arafat's letter to League head 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid details the dangers confronting the peace process due to the closure and Israel's refusal to respect the timetable agreed in accord for withdrawal from Hebron and final status talks, Subayh said.

The Israeli army [word indistinct] from its scheduled withdrawal from parts of the northern governorates, flash point town of Hebron last week, while Israeli elections set for May 29th have raised doubts over the start of final status talks set for the same month.

Kamal said 'Abd-al-Majid had contacted his United Nations counterpart Butrus Butrus-Ghali to discuss the closure. 'Abd-al-Majid also asked the league's United Nations observers to arrange intensive contacts by Arab countries with permanent members of the Security Council to point out the direct threat of the Israeli policies to the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Peres Remarks 'Contravene' Signed Agreements

JN0204094296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 2 Apr 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Commenting on Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' remarks on holding a referendum on the final status negotiations and his support for keeping the settlements in the Palestinian territories within the framework of a final solution, President 'Arafat said today that such remarks contravene agreements signed between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

On another level, 'Arafat inaugurated the Zahrat al-Mada'in projects to beautify the Gaza shoreline this morning. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, Saudi Defense Minister Discuss Closure

JN0204083396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A telephone conversation took place last night between President Yasir 'Arafat and His Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi second deputy prime minister and minister of defense and aviation. They discussed the latest developments in the peace process and the repercussions of Israel's closure of the Palestinian territories since 25 February.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat, French Minister Discuss Bilateral Cooperation

JN0104155996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received French Environment Minister Corinne Lepage at the Presidential Office in Gaza this evening.

They discussed ways of strengthening Palestinian-French cooperation, especially in the water and environment fields. They also discussed political developments in light of the continuation of the Israeli military and economic siege on Palestine.

Palestinian Affairs: Official Comments on Israeli Measures, Dialogue With Hamas

NC0104160496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1415 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid received today Ambassador Muhammad Subayh, Palestine's permanent envoy to the Arab League.

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Ambassador Subayh said after the meeting that he had conveyed a message from Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat to Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid on the danger that the current situation in the Palestinian territories poses to the peace process. He noted that the Arab League secretary general today began urgent initiatives to discuss this issue with all parties, especially with the UN Security Council permanent members, the Arab group in New York, and other Arab parties.

The Palestinian ambassador added that 'Arafat's message to Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid will be distributed to the Arab countries. He noted that the Arab League secretary general believes that the peace process as a whole is encountering extreme danger and that all parties will be losers if the blockade of the Palestinian people—which has reached the point of causing deaths from starvation and shortages of medicine and the destruction of the economy—continues.

On Libyan revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's call for an Arab summit to discuss the current Arab situation, he said: We support the holding of any Arab summit at any time, because it is a major, correct, and necessary demand.

Ambassador Subayh said that the current situation and sufferings in the Palestinian territories are caused by Israel and its continued occupation of Arab territories. He stressed that all the present problems will disappear once the occupation ends.

On the possibility of opening channels to contact the Palestinian Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Ambassador Subayh said: Dialogue is needed all the time. We will continue the dialogue and the discussions with Hamas. The United States, Israel, and the European countries have held dialogues with Hamas, therefore it is even more logical for us to hold such a dialogue to reach agreement on a political program. He added: There is no harm in there being an opposition. We support and accept such an opposition, but it should be a political one and should recognize Palestinian legitimacy.

On Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' visit to Qatar and the Sultanate of Oman, Ambassador Subayh expressed hopes that the talks and dialogue during this visit will be in the interest of the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs: Envoy Warns of Dimona Reactor's Nuclear Dangers

NC0104210496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2042 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—Muhammad Subayh, the Palestinian representative at the Arab League, has said that Israel's nuclear reactor at Dimona in the Negev poses a real danger because of the nuclear waste that has been buried underground and in the Mediterranean since before 1980.

In a statement to MENA, he said that the region is being subjected to more active earthquakes than ever before and in light of this fact it is necessary for the facts about the Dimona reactor to be laid bare. He said that the reactor must be subject to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Subayh asserted that the radiation leak has become a very serious matter and affects all the region's nations without exception. He noted that the Palestinians, in particular, have no means of supervision or protection from nuclear radiation.

Subayh said that the life span of the Israeli nuclear reactor is nearly over because it was built in the 1950's—with outdated technology and without sufficient feasibility studies—on land covering an underground water table. He said that there are no safeguards at all against nuclear dangers to the Palestinian people.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Military Leader Met 'Arafat Before Suicide Operations

MM0204080796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 1 Apr 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Wanted al-Qassam Battalions' Leader Met With 'Arafat Prior to Suicide Operations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Informed Palestinian sources in Gaza yesterday told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Muhammad Dayf, the military leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, successor to Engineer Yahia 'Ayyash, and Israel's and the Palestinian police forces' most wanted man after the recent series of suicide operations in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv, met with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat at the Palestinian presidency's Gaza headquarters 24 hours before the first of these operations was carried out.

The authoritative Palestinian sources added that Muhammad Dayf, from Khan Yunis in Gaza, requested the meeting with the Palestinian president within the context of the dialogue between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the Hamas leaders in the self-rule areas.

According to these sources, during this meeting between the Palestinian president and the man now being hunted down, who is known as the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions' military official, the dialogue focused on the possibility of Hamas participating in the new Palestinian cabinet, which has not been formed yet and is due to be

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formed within five weeks of the opening session of the 88-member Palestinian Legislative Council on 7 March 1996.

The sources said that 'Arafat made a proposal to Muhammad Dayf offering to give Hamas or its affiliates two seats in the new cabinet, and that Dayf, who has no military rank and is considered a representative of the moderate trend in the Islamic Resistance Movement, had shown his readiness to consider this proposal and respond to the Palestinian president within 24 hours.

Senior Palestinian officials are firmly convinced that Muhammad Dayf's meeting and discussion with 'Arafat on the possibility of Hamas participating in the new Palestinian "government" was not a ploy, and that this meeting took place following a decision by the political leadership of the movement inside.

Senior Palestinian officials believe that the series of recent suicide operations may have been intended to obstruct this dialogue, which is seen as an episode in the series of lengthy discussions between the PLO, later the PA, and Hamas. it is known that the Hamas leaders abroad oppose such options and have tried to thwart them more than once.

The officials do not rule out that a certain quarter may have brought up the name of Muhammad Dayf. Even U.S. President Bill Clinton asked Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat during the Sharm al-Shaykh summit on 13 March to arrest him, in connection with the recent series of suicide operations intended to block any possibility of dialogue or agreement between Hamas and the PA.

In the same context, authoritative Palestinian sources also revealed that the Palestinian security organs and the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip held a dialogue a few days before Engineer 'Ayyash's assassination, with 'Ayyash intending to give himself up to the Palestinian police instead of remaining a fugitive and risking assassination by Israeli intelligence agents.

It seems that the Palestinian police refused a Hamas offer in this context which would have meant Yahia 'Ayyash giving himself up to the Palestinian security organs on condition that he was smuggled out of Palestine to avoid the risk of falling into the hands of Israeli intelligence.

According to a senior Palestinian security official, the Israeli intelligence agents planted inside Hamas may have felt that Yahia 'Ayyash would give himself up to the Palestinian police to save his life, and therefore they hastened his assassination to get rid of him and also to embarrass the PA, since the assassination took place in areas under its control.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Says 'Assassination' Reflects Split With PA

TA0104184496 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 1645 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The major faction in the PA [Palestinian Authority], Fatah, issued a strong-worded statement condemning the 'cold-blooded assassination' of one of its activists early this morning in al-Birah. The faction called for a three-day strike in al-Birah and Ramallah. The strike was observed today.

Taysir Ahmad 'Ali al-Lawzi, 22, was riding in a stolen yellow-plated Honda with four other youths in al-Birah shortly after midnight. When they arrived near al-Lawzi's house, across from al-Birah Municipality, they noticed a white jeep behind them flashing its high-beam lights and blasting its horn.

The driver, Ra'id Quwwar, said he stopped immediately. Within seconds two shots have been fired into the rear window hitting al-Lawzi. Shrapnel hit Quwwar in the back of the head and he was treated in Ramallah Hospital for light injury.

Yusri 'Awdah, who was sitting next to al-Lawzi, said two men were in the jeep, which belongs to PA General Intelligence. The man who shot al-Lawzi took one look at him and told them to go to a hospital. Al-Lawzi was pronounced dead upon arrival.

Shortly afterwards the white jeep arrived at the hospital with only the driver in it, the driver explained to the youth that he and his colleague thought that the five in the car were Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists distributing leaflets. Palestinians said Hamas has distributed a leaflet last night in Ramallah area.

Around 8:30am, a number of masked Palestinian security agents armed with machine guns raided Ramallah hospital and said they wanted to take al-Lawzi's body, but a large number of Fatah activists had arrived at the hospital by that time, and they blocked the security agents. Na'man 'Abd-al-Dayim, al-Lawzi's uncle, said that one of the masked agents raised his rifle inside the hospital; 'it could have been a massacre.'

Al-Lawzi was buried in al-Birah cemetery at around 11 am with his family and friends considering him a martyr.

The Governor of Ramallah, Mustafa 'Isa, visited the wake house and promised the family a full investigation. The District Attorney of Ramallah said the security agent would be charged with intentional murder. But General Intelligence agents denied knowledge of the killer.

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The incident has begun a power struggle in Fatah between the disenfranchised activists and those working the PA security. Fatah activists in al-Birah threatened that if the investigation is not serious and the killer not punished accordingly they will take justice into their own hands. 'No one will tell you what he plans to do, but if the incident is forgotten the Shabab won't forget,' said Fatah activist Marwan Husayn.

Taysir was the eldest of five children; he worked as a night security guard for the Ramallah Water Authority.

Following is the text of a Fatah leaflet distributed in the Ramallah area today:

To Our Heroic Palestinian People:

The so-called Palestinian Intelligence has assassinated one of our faction leaders, Taysir al-Lawzi, in cold blood. This assassination comes after a series of despised measures that have nothing to do with security or morality. They have reached the level of breaking into the homes of members of our factions for searches. We have warned against such measures to no avail.

Fatah in al-Birah which maintains security in our city and stood up to occupation and the settlers in the absence of the authority decided to prohibit the activities of the General Intelligence apparatus in this area. This is until all of the employees of the apparatus from the Ramallah region are fired. We warn their patrols from entering, for they will be held accountable.

[Signed] Fatah, al-Birah

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Algeria

Algeria: FLN Welcomes National Dialogue Proposal

LD0104143196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] For political parties, national public figures, and organizations, next Saturday [6 April] will be the date for the resumption of national dialogue with a view to finding a way of taking the country out of the crisis. Reactions recorded so far, following President Zeroual's invitation for this dialogue, include that of the FLN [National Liberation Front] party which has responded positively to the invitation in order to take the country out of the painful crisis it is going through.

For its part, in a statement, the National Party for Solidarity and Development considers that the president's recent invitation for a dialogue is yet further proof of his wish to promote constructive dialogue as a civilized means to encourage the gradual and definitive return to civil peace.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Leaves for Talks With al-Asad in Damascus

NC0204092196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0845 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Apr (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak left for Damascus today on a lightning working visit during which he will hold talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad on various Arab issues. Heading the list of issues is progress in the peace process on the Syrian-Israeli track in light of developments in the region.

The two presidents will also discuss developments in the peace process on the other tracks and various other Arab issues.

The president is accompanied on his visit by an official delegation including Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, Supply and Trade Minister Ahmad Juwayli, Presidential Office head Dr. Zakariya Azmi, and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for political affairs.

Egypt: Musa—Nuclear Threat Blocks Regional Security Cooperation

NC0104204796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2015 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today described the declared willingness of Israel and Jordan to cooperate on military and security matters as a purely bilateral affair that has no connection with the overall regional situation.

He emphasized that no regional security agreements can be concluded nor can there be any sort of regional security cooperation as long as the peace process continues to be flawed.

Musa added that it is impossible to sign or even discuss regional security agreements while even the hint of a nuclear threat persists and while the nuclear status of a certain country remains unacceptable. He stressed that unless these flaws are corrected, particularly the nuclear issue, there can never be security agreements or any movement toward concluding such agreements.

Musa said that Egypt cannot accept security cooperation or agree to discuss regional security cooperation as long as the suspicion persists that Israel possesses a nuclear military capability. He said that this issue "definitely" precludes any talk about security cooperation.

Musa remarked: This is an Egyptian message addressed to whomever it may concern. There is no room for any discussion about regional security cooperation while the nuclear issue remains unsolved and the flaws in the peace process multiply.

Musa said he agrees with the statement made today by Jordanian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti that it is not possible to have regional cooperation while the peace process remains flawed. Musa said he totally agrees with the Jordanian official on this matter, particularly as the Jordanian prime minister is conversant with all regional events.

Asked if Egypt is participating in the current contacts seeking to halt the deterioration of the security situation in south Lebanon, Musa replied: South Lebanon is occupied. The occupation must end because it creates tensions.

Musa called on all concerned parties to give peace a real chance.

Egypt: U.S. Promise To Let Israel Keep Nuclear Weapons Criticized

NC0104140696 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 2

[Editorial: "The United States Deserves To Be Blamed More Than Israel"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel might not be totally responsible for its current repressive policies and arbitrarily practices against the Palestinians. It has been following this policy from the time it was planted in the region, even though it should have formed new ones to

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conform to the changes in the region, in which Israel itself has been an influential and major player.

But most of the responsibility for these intransigent Israeli practices now lies specifically with the United States, which is doing all that is possible and attempting the impossible to back Israel at the expense of the Arabs.

The United States in its capacity as the principal sponsor of the peace process is supposedly neutral, first because it is morally right, and second to ensure that the peace process will be spared any violent shifts.

But, regrettably, at the decisive moments when the peace process is on trial and the agreements signed by the Palestinian and Israeli sides are being implemented, the United States appears to have abandoned its role as a sponsor of the peace process and to be siding with Israel quite openly and brazenly.

This is happening at a time when the peace process is in dire need of an "impartial" party to save what can be saved.

The United States is ignoring and disregarding the Arab reactions as if they were worthless, thus putting the peace process at risk as a result of Israeli arbitrariness and blatant U.S. partiality.

The most frightening aspect of this bias is the allegation that the United States will give Israel written permission—the first of its kind—to retain nuclear weapons even when a comprehensive peace is reached with its Arab neighbors.

According to published reports, this recognition will be included in the joint defense agreement that President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will sign at the end of next month.

If these reports are true, the United States will be making a very grave mistake that undermines the bases of the peace process and greatly endangers it. It is beyond reason for the United States to allow only Israel to have a nuclear capability in a region that will remain vulnerable to an explosion at any minute because of the political and military imbalances, and this at a time when the whole world is talking about the need to get rid of nuclear weapons and halt their proliferation. The irony is that the United States itself put intensive pressure on some countries in the region to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty last year on the pretext of protecting peace while never attempting to put the least pressure on Israel, which has a huge nuclear arsenal.

Thus, the United States should be blamed as much as Israel when the latter implements idiotic policies that are bound to endanger peace, whether through its arbitrary practices against the Palestinians, its suppression of that people with all available means, or its insistence on keeping nuclear weapons, which are useless against belts of explosives worn around the waist of a Palestinians who feel the bitterness of the Israeli humiliation of their people.

Egypt: Musa Comments on Sudan, Meets Israeli Ambassador

NC0104213296 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today called on Sudan to cooperate with the regional and international communities in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1044 pertaining to the handing over of the suspects involved in the sinful attempt on President Husni Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa last year.

Musa added that the international community can never remain silent vis-a-vis Sudan's refusal to comply with the relevant Security Council resolution. He noted that Egypt is trying to spare the Sudanese people any hardships that they might suffer as a result of their government's attitude.

On another issue, 'Amr Musa described reports about military cooperation between Jordan and Israel as a purely bilateral affair, unconnected with the regional situation. He emphasized that Egypt can never accept security cooperation while even a hint persists of an Israeli nuclear military capability and as long as the flaws affecting the peace process continue.

'Amr Musa met this evening with Israeli Ambassador David Sultan. They discussed the overall status of the two countries' relations, Middle East developments, and the peace process particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

The Israeli ambassador stated that the meeting was very positive and that the talks dealt with all issues of interest to the two countries. The Israeli ambassador added that the dialogue continues between Egypt and Israel to boost the peace process and improve the regional situation.

David Sultan praised Egypt's role in attaining peace, noting that this role was apparent during Sharm al-Shaykh's summit of peacemakers. He noted that Israel has expressed a wish that Egypt should continue its positive and active role in promoting the peace process.

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Egypt: Libyan People's Congress Official Arrives for Brief Visit

NC0104194596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1930 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—Muhammad Zanati, secretary of the General People's Congress in Libya, arrived in Cairo tonight from Khartoum on a short visit to Egypt.

He was received at the airport by Dr. Talbah 'Uwaydah, chairman of the People's Assembly Arab Relations Committee.

Egypt: Mubarak Assassination Attempt Suspects Still in Khartoum

NC0104165396 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 29 Mar 96 p 13

[Report by Hamdi Rizk]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Departments of the Egyptian secret service have received a secret report stating once again that the three suspects charged with attempting to assassinate President Husni Mubarak are still in Khartoum. The report indicates that extensive efforts were made to change their travel documents and names. The report sent by the Alliance of the People's Working Forces — affiliated to former President Ja'far Numayri — from Sudan notes that it has become difficult to trace the suspects whereabouts.

The report mentions that 13 terrorist groups are active in Khartoum. They include the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which is located on al-Ghabah street in the al-Maqran neighborhood. The building was previously used by the Sudanese Counternarcotics Administration. The list also includes an office of the Islamic Group in Khartoum. There were efforts to merge the two groups recently. However, the two groups's officials abroad rejected the idea. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Luxor Investigation Reveals 'No Collusion With Hijackers'

MM0104150796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 30 Mar 96 p 7

[Report by Walid Salah: "Security Official Tells AL-HAYAH: No Security Elements Colluded With Hijackers"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — In an exclusive statement to AL-HAYAH high-ranking Egyptian security sources have said that the investigations conducted in recent hours with employees at Luxor Airport have revealed no collusion with the hijackers. The sources said that it is an obvious matter for security services to investigate all the circumstances of the incident and to examine all the measures taken at the airport to unravel the mystery surrounding the hijack operation.

The sources pointed out that a committee comprised of security officials went to Luxor immediately after the incident to examine security measures in order to plug any loopholes and prevent a repetition of the incident. The committee ascertained the soundness of the measures taken at Luxor Airport. The sources denied that any security men from EgyptAir or Luxor Airport facilitated the three hijackers' access. The sources said that new information claims that the first defendant was in the departure hall for a whole hour before the plane took off, and he was not suspected. And he purchased some alcoholic drinks from the duty-free shop immediately before heading for the plane.

Egypt: Airliner Hijackers Charged, Confess

NC0104163096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1430 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—Counselor Hisham Saraya, attorney general at the Supreme State Security Prosecution, today remanded to custody for 15 days, pending investigation, the three hijackers that hijacked a plane to Libya recently.

The prosecution charged the hijackers with a number of charges, for which they face a punishment as severe as death. They were charged with hijacking a means of transport, a plane, and being in possession of and using explosives on a public transport means, thus endangering the lives and money of citizens.

The three defendants are Muhammad Mahmud Humayd, his son Khalid, and his cousin Ahmad Husayn Kamil.

The three hijackers made detailed confessions before the prosecution. They confessed that the first defendant thought of hijacking a plane to Libya to request political asylum in order to enhance the status of the Bani-Hilal clan to which he belongs.

The defendants said that the first defendant asked the second and third defendants for their help to enhance the status of their clan. He did not tell them specifically what they would do.

The second and third defendants confessed that they bought explosives from a merchant on the Idfu mountains and that they prepared them and made the necessary match cords. They also bought condensers to prepare the charges in bomb form.

The second and third defendants tied the cords round their waists and headed for Luxor airport. At the airport toilet, the first defendant took the cords from defendants

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Khalid and Ahmad and put them in a Samsonite. He put amounts of powder and explosives in the same Samsonite, together with three bottles of brandy and a knife he bought from the duty free shop.

The defendants boarded the plane and took their seats in first class. The first defendant then told the second and third defendants that the thing they would do to enhance the status of their clan was to hijack a plane to Libya.

Egypt: Egyptian-Chinese Talks Held; Officials Comment

NC0204104696 Cairo MENA in English 2012 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo April 1 (MENA)—An Egyptian-Chinese session of talks was held at the Foreign Ministry premises here today with Ambassador Sayyid Abu-Zayd, assistant foreign minister for Asian affairs, leading the Egyptian side and the Chinese first deputy foreign minister leading his country's side.

Abu-Zayd said the talks mark the 40th anniversary since Sino-Egyptian ties were established. Trade exchange between Egypt and China last year accounted for dlrs 450 million, Abu-Zayd said and added that the amount falls short of the two countries' aspirations and is not on a par with the distinguished relations between Presidents Husni Mubarak and Jiang Zemin. The figure does not translate the potentials of the two countries, he regretted.

Abu-Zayd called for boosting trade exchange between the two countries along with increasing Egyptian exports to China and attracting Chinese investments to Egypt.

The Chinese chief delegate hailed Egypt's regional and global role with emphasis on its strategic role in shoring up the Mideast peace process. He paid tribute to the positive relations between the two countries and the identity of their views vis-a-vis the different issues.

Knowing that the trade balance between the two countries tips in favor of Beijing, the Chinese official said future joint ventures will help realize balance in trade exchange.

On the impact of Sino-Israeli military cooperation on Sino-Arab relations, the Chinese official said military cooperation with Israel only occupies a small percentage of China's global relations adding that China's stances regarding the Mideast question have not changed. He urged the Israeli and Palestinian sides to adopt positive stances to solve current problems facing the peace process.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi's Health, Succession Issue Viewed

JN3003121796 Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 29 Mar 96 pp 20-22

[Report by Nayil Mukhaybar in London]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "Libya will face serious developments in the coming months." This is the conclusion of a highly confidential report submitted by the security agency of a European country that considers itself directly involved in the situation in North Africa to the higher political authorities in that country. Due to the seriousness of the report, there was a special concern not to divulge its contents inside that country's security agency and to distribute it only on a very limited scale.

The seriousness of this six-page report lies in the fact that, for the first time, it bypasses all previous analyses and reports that dealt with the future of Libya in light of the international siege and sanctions to which the Libyan regime has been exposed, the increasing role of extremist Islamic groups in creating riots and disturbances, and even the dangers of a military coup.

According to the report, the serious developments that might take place in Libya in the near future are not linked with the attempted military mutiny that took place in the Bani Walid area or with the bloody incidents that erupted in Banghazi last September, in which many were killed and which led al-Qadhdhafi to expel thousands of Palestinian, Sudanese, Arab, African, and other workers and take tough measures to face the Islamists that threaten his regime.

Despite these events, security experts and political observers are unanimous that al-Qadhdhafi is still in control of the regime thanks to his successful policy in playing the game of balances and tribal sensitivities and the domination of his tribe, al-Qadhadhifah, over influential positions and decisionmaking. He is also in control of the regime thanks to his intelligence services, which control the country with an iron fist, in addition to his continuous control over the military, which has always been viewed by the security services as the only real danger to the regime.

The recent report asserts that a jolt or an explosion would cripple the head of the Libyan rule, namely, al-Qadhdhafi himself. The report affirms that the Libyan president is suffering from a chronic disease, which has recently become serious and caused him to bring in at least three medical teams — Italian, Swedish, and French. He also summoned a famous Russian physician. It seems that the information, which the writers of

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the security-political report obtained from physicians who took part in examining al-Qadhdhafi, show that the results of the diagnosis are very pessimistic. Some of those physicians believe that al-Qadhdhafi's disease is similar to that of former Algerian president Houari Boumedienne. The report says that al-Qadhdhafi has been suffering from this disease for several years and that this disease has recently entered a critical stage. Al-Qadhdhafi began to lose consciousness for one or two hours a week, and Swedish physicians placed him under continuous supervision. The report reveals that some physicians fear that al-Qadhdhafi would enter a sudden and long coma in the next few months, particularly if they have to increase his medication. [passage omitted]

In the recent months, observers have noticed changes in the balance of power and the emergence of four axes:

The first axis is the family one led by regime strongman 'Abdallah al-Sanusi, al-Qadhdhafi's brother-in-law and official in charge of the largest intelligence service, which includes the president's special guard.

The second axis consists of al-Qadhdhafi's cousins and his tribe. Ahmad Qadhdhaf-al-Ddam is trying to gain the support of al-Qadhadhi.ah tribe to face any emergency.

The third axis — described by observers as "the security axis" — is led by ranking security official Musa Kuset, who is in charge of the external action branch of the revolutionary committees. Kuset knew how to step in following the removal of Major 'Abd-al-Salam al-Jallud and how to attract influential families in Tripoli, his birthplace. He also gained al-Qadhdhafi's confidence due to his good relations with the United States, which go back to the time he studied there. However, his failure to achieve any change in the American stand on sanctions undermined his position and removed him from the inner circle.

The axis of the military institution and officers, led by Defense Minister and Army Commander Abu-Bakr Jabir, al-Khuwayldi, al-Humaydi, and Mustafa al-Kharrubi, remains the major axis. [passage omitted]

The latest report revealed that al-Qadhdhafi's health is deteriorating, and emphasized that after receiving the unfavorable reports about his health, al-Qadhdhafi became isolated and frustrated. The Libyan leader also began to prepare one of his sons to succeed him. Observers say that the colonel soon put aside his elder son Muhammad, an engineer born to his first wife, who is from Tripoli and of Turkish origin. This exclusion came despite the political and security education Muhammad had received, especially from 'Abd-al-Salam al-Zadamah, the man of special and secret operations in the Libyan Intelligence.

It appears al-Qadhdhafi's parental political inclinations favor the sons born to his second wife Safiyah, sister of 'Abdallah al-Sanusi's wife. Safiyah's sons are Sayf-al-Islam, al-Sa'idi, Haniba'l, al-Mu'tasim, and Khamis. Khamis is still young, while al-Mu'tasim seems to have inherited his father's artistic and literary rather than political leanings. As for Haniba'l, he does not appear to be favored by his father although he is a naval officer and considered to be the most serious of al-Qadhdhafi's sons. Therefore, Sayf-al-Islam and al-Sa'idi remain the only heirs whose stars began to rise over the past few months and who began to be considered as successors. The two men became active in the same manner as 'Udayy and Qusayy Saddam Husayn, and they gradually began to assume new posts.

It seems that Sayf-al-Islam was at the forefront of this race. Through his business activities and money he started to impose his domination and assert his influence especially during the blockade. He set up multibranch commercial companies that work covertly and overtly in the field of blockade violation. Sayf-al-Islam was a business partner of 'Udayy Saddam Husayn and Yasir Hashemi-Rafsanjani. His name was recently mentioned in connection with a number of scandals. It was reported that he bought more than 100 million Libyan dinars from some Arab countries at the rate of a quarter of a dollar for the dinar, and sold the sum to the Libyan Central Bank at the official rate, added to this were his profits that were doubled several times. A few weeks ago, a scandal tarnished al-Qadhdhafi's son when he was accused of laundering forged Iranian rials estimated at $8 million. Reliable sources said this scandal was baseless. Those acquainted with what is going on in Libya, especially supporters of Sayf-al-Islam, say this charge was part of the current power struggle in Tripoli, and that its objective was to undermine Sayf-al-Islam's reputation and his assets in the succession process.

Available information indicates that al-Qadhdhafi's other son, al-Sa'idi, has strongly entered this silent struggle, and that he is practically considered to be al-Qadhdhafi's successor, since he has the best chance of assuming this post. First, because he is preferred by his father who began to increasingly ask him to carry out political missions abroad. Second, because al-Sa'idi succeeded in building a network of relations with the influential parties in Libya starting with the military establishment where he was an officer in the ground forces, and ending with the security organs through his close relations with 'Abdallah al-Sanusi at a time when Sayf-al-Islam has closer relations with Musa Kosah. These two security officials, who are close to al-Qadhdhafi, do not have suspicious ambitions, primarily because they are wanted by the French justice

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for the bombing of a UTA plane over Niger. Their fate, therefore, depends on a decision by al-Qadhdhafi. [passage omitted]

Sudan

Sudan: President al-Bashir Sworn In, Addresses National Assembly

EA0104143696 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1005 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Khartoum, 1 April—Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, the elected president of the Republic, has sworn the constitutional oath before the elected National Assembly, and has now begun addressing the nation on the occasion of his election as president of the Republic.

Sudan: Al-Bashir Promises 'Relaxation' in Foreign Relations

EA0104164296 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The president of the Republic, Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, today swore the constitutional oath of office before the National Assembly. In his address marking the occasion, his excellency reviewed the principles and basic features characterizing the coming period. [passage omitted]

Lt. Gen. 'Umar al-Bashir went on to say that certain quarters were seeking to isolate Sudan, but stressed that the coming period would witness a relaxation [infiraj] in Sudan's foreign relations by way of dialogue with neighboring states, particularly Egypt. He said an objective dialogue would be engaged in with the EU countries and the United States, but not without keeping the public interest in mind. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Al-Bashir Says Peace New Government's 'Top Priority'

EA0104172296 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1008 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 1 April — Lieutenant General al-Bashir has stressed that the step the other side is taking on the road to peace [as received], saying that peace represents the beginning of the solution to Sudan's problems. He said that war was not the solution and that it had been imposed on the government. He appealed to the international community and friendly countries to support the efforts being made to bring about peace. He said: Peace will be the top priority on the new government's agenda, followed by developmental, economic, and social issues [words indistinct].

Al-Bashir said: Today the country is entering a new stage with the convening of the elected National Assembly and the swearing in of the first elected president of the Republic since independence in 1956. He stressed that the doors to participatory consultation and joint efforts would remain open to the sons of the homeland in order to broaden the base of the participatory exercise of authority, thus preserving the principles of the faith, the sacredness of the homeland, the country's sovereignty, and its freedom of decision-making by way of laying down a comprehensive constitution for the country, (?which would be submitted) to the people.

He went on to say that the Sudanese people [words indistinct] the ballot boxes in the presidential and parliamentary elections held in March, which saw the biggest turnout of voters in Sudan's (?history). He said he was eager to see a peaceful and democratic transition for the authority and its stance against those rebelling against the public will and the enemies of the homeland.

He expressed his gratitude to the international and regional organizations which participated in monitoring the elections and for what they had reported on them. He also thanked the international and local media for their interest in recording the great transformation the country had witnessed.

Sudan: New Speaker al-Turabi Addresses National Assembly

EA0104171396 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1025 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 1 April — Dr. Hasan Abdullah al-Turabi, the speaker of the elected National Assembly, has stressed that the Assembly will engage in the expression of views and sincere consultation and discussion on every issue, seeking by way of consensus to sincerely represent the people. He said these words this morning during the first session of the elected National Assembly. His excellency went on to say that the government and the Assembly would perform as a single unit in constant consultation with the purpose of forming a good executive authority for Sudan and of leading the people in representing their will.

Dr. al-Turabi went on to say that the people expected that in the course of a few years the Assembly and the government would bring about a cultural renaissance in politics, society, lifestyle, and science on the basis of a forthcoming constitution seeking national unity between the north and the south, reconciliation among the various forces of the people, and liberalized and cooperative foreign relations (?on the basis) of honor and independence. His excellency said that, having been elected speaker of the Assembly, he would observe the advice of the deputies, public opinion, convention, and ethics and that he would act under the guidance of the

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secretariat-general in directing the Assembly's affairs [sentence indistinct].

Dr. al-Turabi stressed that the people had not elected the members of the Assembly on the basis of partisanship of historic loyalties, but on the basis of freedom of choice. He added that the Assembly was replete with wise and knowledgable individuals representing all social sectors — women, men of middle age, and youths.

Sudan: Official Says Government To Start 'New Peace Initiative'

AB0104141896 Paris AFP in English 1232 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Khartoum, April 1 (AFP) — Khartoum has begun contacts with both south Sudan rebels and northern opposition groups in a new peace effort, the daily AL-RA'Y AL-AKHAR reported Monday [1 April].

The Sudanese Government "will in the the next few days embark on a new peace initiative that will cover all elements in the rebel movement," Federal Chamber Minister Ali al-Haj Muhammad said, quoted by the independent paper.

Efforts to reconcile with northern opposition groups "are still going on," Muhammad said, admitting that "due to the volume of issues to be discussed with the opposition, reconciliation will take some time."

Muhammad also pointed to the return to Sudan of Carbino Kuang, a southern militia leader who broke away from the main rebel group Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SLPA), as a sign of the state's willingness to find a "radical solution" to the 12-year civil war in the south.

Khartoum has already declared a ceasefire and put out peace feelers with another SPLA splinter leader Riak Machar. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Former Ministers To Retain Jobs Until Further Notice

EA0104164596 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The president of the Republic, Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, today issued a republican decree mandating that the two vice presidents, federal ministers, ministers of state, and all others holding constitutional posts continue discharging their duties pending the issuance of another decree. [passage omitted]

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Bahrain

Bahrain: 2 Arsonists Jailed; Police Try To Halt Demonstration

NC0204131196 Paris AFP in English 0854 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, April 2 (AFP)— Bahrain's state security court jailed two arsonists for seven and five years as part of a government crackdown to try to stamp out 16 months of political unrest, newspapers reported on Tuesday [2 April].

Meanwhile, anti-riot police fired shots in the air and used tear-gas to break up an anti-government demonstration late Monday in Jamrah, a Shiite Muslim suburb of Manama.

Iskandar Ahmad Salman, 22, and Husayn 'Ali Ahmad, 19, were also fined 86,000 dollars and 43,000 dollars after being found guilty late Monday of setting fire to two electricity generators in Manama.

The state security court has now jailed five anti-government protesters since the amir, Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, toughened the law to try to end unrest.

The amir ruled that anyone accused of an offence linked to "anti-government troubles" would be automatically tried by the state security court, whose verdicts can not be appealed.

At least 21 people have died in unrest led by Bahrain's Shiite majority since December 1994 when the Sunni Muslim-led authorities arrested a Shiite cleric who called for the restoration of parliament, suspended in 1975.

The execution last week of a Shiite convicted of killing a policeman sparked a fresh surge of violent protests in Manama's Shiite suburbs. On Monday, several dozen demonstrators took to the streets of Jamrah.

Police have set up checkpoints at entrances to the districts of al-Diraz, Jiddah and Sanabis, and are systematically searching all vehicles.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Council Approves Security Plan for Northern Border

LD0204084396 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Council of Ministers held its weekly meeting this morning at al-Bayan Palace under the chairmanship of Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah Al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent. [passage omitted]

On the basis of the council's interest to provide security protection to the country's northern borders, the Council of Ministers reviewed a report regarding the second stage of the security belt project aimed at tightly controlling the northern boundaries of the state and its protection from probable dangers.

The report was drawn up in the light of lengthy studies of experiences of advanced countries, as well as in conformity with the country's need of a suitable security system. The report of the council approved the necessary financial measures to execute this phase and charged the concerned parties to start working on it. [passage omitted]

Kuwait: Ministries Told To Submit Accounts; 'Mismanagement' Suspected

NC3003214196 Paris AFP in English 2009 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, March 30 (AFP) — The Kuwaiti parliament on Saturday [30 March] denounced the mismanagement of public funds and gave six ministries a two-week deadline to submit their accounts to a government audit commission.

"The government is laughing at us and is not showing any cooperation over this," said deputy Ahmad Shri'at during a five-hour debate on a report by a parliamentary committee in charge of protecting public funds.

The deputies accused the education, religious property, finance, trade, public works and justice ministries which have a combined budget of 21 million dollars of trying to avoid an audit.

A parliamentary resolution gave them two weeks to comply or face prosecution.

"The law on protecting public funds must be strictly applied, up to sending ministers before the courts," said another deputy 'Abd-al-Muhsin Jamal, who said he wanted "to sound a warning over the bad handling of public funds by the government."

In November the case of former oil minister 'Ali al-Khalifah al-Sabah, a member of the Kuwaiti royal family, accused with four others from the Kuwait Oil Tanker Co. of embezzling 102 million dollars, was handed over to a "ministers court."

Left-wing Deputy Ahmad al-Khatib said: "At the moment the Iraqi enemy was occupying our lands, a band (of senior Kuwaiti officials) broke into the public funds. These thieves are still here. They are invited to official receptions and they are circulating freely."

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Oman

Oman: Israeli Prime Minister Arrives, Accorded Official Reception

JN0104130196 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the invitation of the government of His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, His Excellency Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister of the State of Israel, arrived in the country this afternoon on an official two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman. The Israeli prime minister will meet with His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id. They are expected to discuss issues of interest to the Omani and Israeli sides, as well as developments in the regional and international arenas.

His Highness Thuwayni Bin-Shihab Al Sa'id, personal representative of His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, led those who received His Excellency Shim'on Peres upon his arrival at Salalah Civilian Airport. Also on hand to receive the Israeli prime minister were Information Minister 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Muhammad al-Rawwas; Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs; Maqbul Bin-'Ali Sultan, minister of trade and industry; Communications Minister Salim Bin-'Abdallah al-Ghazali; Musallam Bin-'Ali al-Busa'idi, minister of state and governor of Dhofar; Humud Bin-Faysal al-Busa'idi, secretary general of the Council of Ministers; Hamid Bin-Sa'id al-'Awfi, minister of water resources; and Muhammad Bin-Nasir al-Qusaybi, secretary general of the Ministry of National Economy.

The Israeli prime minister was accorded an official reception. When his excellency's plane came to a halt, the chief of the Sultani Protocol boarded the plane and asked his excellency to disembark. His excellency the Israeli prime minister then shook hands with the personal representative of his majesty the sultan. Afterward, the personal representative escorted His Excellency Shim'on Peres to the dais. The Israeli national anthem and the Omani Sultani anthem were played. The commander of the Guard of Honor stepped forward and asked His Excellency Shim'on Peres to inspect the Honor Guard, which stood at attention to salute him. The guest's motorcade then left for the al-Hisn Palace.

His Excellency Shim'on Peres is accompanied by a high-level delegation that includes Energy Minister Gonen Segev and other senior Israeli Government officials.

Oman: Peres Holds News Conference

JN0104193696 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Shim'on Peres, prime minister of Israel, expressed satisfaction with the visit to the Sultanate, affirming that many projects will be implemented in both countries, particularly in the fields of water and energy. This came at a news conference today after his meeting with His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id. Peres added that he listened to his majesty's views regarding many issues, which will help give momentum to the Middle East peace process. He noted that he had taken necessary measures to lift the closure on the Palestinian territory in the wake of the suicide attacks carried out by Palestinians in the heart of Israel last month. Peres reiterated his country's desire to activate talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

His Excellency Shim'on Peres, Israeli prime minister and defense minister, today visited the sultan's horse stables in Salalah.

Oman: Peres, Bin-'Alawi Hold News Conference in Salalah

JN0104214096 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television Network in Arabic 2045 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Shim'on Peres, Israeli prime minister and defense minister, praised the wisdom of His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id. He added that his majesty is a leader who has chosen his course by himself with great wisdom and courage by placing the picture of the entire region before his eyes with all its delicate details. This came at a joint news conference Peres held with His Excellency Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs, at the al-Hisn Palace in Salalah today following his meeting with his majesty the sultan.

Peres added that his visit to the Sultanate is a demonstration of how both the Arabs and Israelis can build a new Middle East without wars, without hatred, and with economic cooperation. Peres said that while the winds of the of the old Middle East are still blowing we feel the breeze of the future for the coming generations. Shim'on Peres said that his majesty the sultan was the first Arab leader to recognize peace between Egypt and Israel, noting that since then he has been courageously supporting all steps toward peace.

Regarding his announcement that he will hold a referendum on peace, the Israeli prime minister said that he

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believed, without any doubt, that this aimed at reaching a just solution and at gaining the support of the majority of the people. He said: The referendum will save time and help gain the support of the majority of the people and this would be useful in achieving a permanent solution. Affirming the importance of achieving a comprehensive peace in the region, Peres said: We must achieve a comprehensive peace. We are aware of the importance of holding negotiations with the Syrians because this would lead to a comprehensive peace. We achieved peace with Egypt; we are talking with the Palestinians and we have made much progress in this regard. If we achieve peace with the Syrians and the Lebanese there will be no reason for conflicts in the Middle East.

Asked about the peace process, Yusuf Bin-'Alawi, minister of state for foreign affairs, said: The people of Israel have chosen the path of peace with their neighbors. The Arab governments and people, as well as the Israeli Government and people, have chosen this time to move ahead on the path of peace. He expressed hope that this will be the real fact now and tomorrow, adding that this is the biggest change in relations between the Arabs and the Israelis for the sake of the coming generations.

His excellency said: We are pleased to have with us today Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, who supports peace in the Middle East and who organized the peace process. He added that the Israeli prime minister came here, hoping that this visit will show the Arab world and the Israeli people the value of peace.

Oman: Sultan Qabus Receives Peres; Communique on Talks Issued

JN0104164896 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television Network in English 1600 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His Majesty Sultan Qabus gave an audience in his office at al-Hisn palace in Salalah today to His Excellency Shim'on Peres, Israel's prime minister and minister of defense.

The audience was attended by His Highness Thuwayni Bin-Shihab Al Sa'id, personal representative of his majesty the sultan; His Excellency Sayf Bin-Hamad Bin-Sa'ud, minister of the diwan of the Royal Court; His Excellency 'Ali Bin-Majid al-Ma'mari, minister of the palace office and head of the office of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces; His Excellency 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Muhammad al-Rawwas, minister of information; His Excellency Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs; and His Excellency Maqbul Bin-'Ali Bin-Sultan, minister of commerce and industry. From the Israeli side, the delegation accompanying the Israeli prime minister attended the audience.

After the meeting, a communique was issued, during which the meeting between his majesty the sultan and his excellency the Israeli prime minister was held within the framework of supporting the Middle East peace process and in expression of the growing relations between the two countries. [sentence as heard]

The communique said: Regional issues and ways of stepping up cooperation between the two countries were discussed. Both leaders reiterated their commitment toward achieving a just, comprehensive, and permanent peace in the region and expressed their hope that all parties would support the steps taken at the Peacemakers Summit in Sharm al-Shaykh. In this regard, the discussion centered on the Palestinian-Israeli track and the urgent need to extend regional and international economic aid to the Palestinian National Authority.

His majesty the sultan expressed his deep concern on the current conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. His excellency the Israeli prime minister said he was determined to find ways and means to overcome the current situation, thus supporting the agreements signed between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. He briefed his majesty on the steps he had taken shortly before his visit to the Sultanate to supply food and medicine to the Palestinians and enabling them to export their goods.

The communique stressed the importance of serious continuation of negotiations on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks to achieve a just and comprehensive peace among all parties.

His majesty the sultan and his excellency the Israeli prime minister reiterated the importance of active participation in multilateral talks on the Middle East peace process as a means to realize the economic interest of all the peoples of the region.

Both leaders expressed their solid conviction that exchange of commercial representation between the sultanate and Israel based on the agreement signed between the two countries in Muscat in January would act to improve bilateral, as well as multilateral cooperation, particularly in economic and technical spheres.

Oman: Israel's Peres Invites Sultan To Visit

TA0104152796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has invited Omani Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id to visit Israel, and the sultan thanked him for the invitation. Our

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correspondent in Oman Gil Litman reports that the two leaders met for approximately one hour at the sultan's palace in Salalah.

During the meeting, the sultan said that Oman is committed to the peace process and supports Shim'on Peres' concept of a new Middle East. The sultan noted that everything was open with regard to reciprocal visits between citizens of both countries and expressed the hope that additional states in the region would soon join the peace process.

Economic officials from Israel met with the Omani industry and trade minister. At the meeting it was agreed that delegations of businessmen and economic figures from Oman and Israel would exchange reciprocal visits. They also agreed on ways to increase cooperation between both countries.

Oman: Peres Attends Dinner Banquet Hosted by Sultan Qabus

JN0104182696 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id held a dinner banquet at the al-Ribat Palace in Salalah this evening in honor of His Excellency Shim'on Peres, Israeli prime minister and defense minister, and his accompanying delegation, currently on a visit to the sultanate. [passage omitted]

Oman: Peres Gets 'Red Carpet' Treatment During Visit

NC0104185696 Paris AFP in English 1606 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Report by Awad Said]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Salalah, Oman, April 1 (AFP) — Oman rolled out the red carpet Monday [1 April] for Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres as he began a groundbreaking visit to boost fledgling ties with the Gulf Arab state and its neighbour Qatar.

Peres and his large delegation of economic and political advisors were given a guard of honour at Salalah airport as an Omani band struck up the Israeli national anthem — a first in a Gulf Arab country.

Peres, on his first Gulf tour, was welcomed by a personal representative of Sultan Qabus and several ministers before being whisked off in a black limousine decorated with Israeli and Omani flags to the sultan's summer palace for talks.

A tight security cordon was thrown around Salalah, 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) south of Muscat, where Peres was due to spend the night before travelling to Qatar on Tuesday for the first ever visit by an Israeli premier.

Like other Gulf Arab states, Oman and Qatar do not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Peres and Sultan Qabus agreed in their talks to boost cooperation between their two countries, especially in economic fields.

In a joint statement they said their meeting "reflects the development of bilateral ties and is part of the support" for the Middle East peace process.

Peres added: "As for my visit here, again it is a demonstration of how both Arabs and Israelis can build a new Middle East without wars, without hatred, with economic cooperation."

But Sultan Qabus also voiced his "deep concern about the situation of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza," hit by a five-week-old Israeli blockade, and the two leaders agreed urgent economic aid was needed for the Palestinian Authority.

They said the opening of trade representation offices in each other's country, agreed on January 27, would further strengthen ties, but they did not give any indication when the offices would be opened.

Diplomats in Muscat said Israeli officials were already in the Omani capital to prepare for the opening.

Peres hopes to conclude a similar deal with Qatar when he holds talks with the amir, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, on Tuesday.

Peres' predecessor Yitzhaq Rabin was the first Israeli prime minister to set foot in Oman in December 1994, but his visit was much more discreet than the official welcome that met Peres Monday.

Nevertheless, both Oman and Qatar were careful not to draw attention to the Israeli premier's visit which was not even officially announced in Doha.

Saudi Arabia, the most powerful member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), refuses to entertain links with Israel until an all-encompassing Middle East peace deal including Lebanon and Syria has been agreed.

In an unusual move, a Qatari daily published an unofficial poll showing more than two-thirds of Qataris are opposed to establishing ties with Israel.

An overwhelming 98 percent of those questioned by the daily AL-WATAN also classified Israel as "the enemy" and "usurper" of Arab rights."

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With an eye on May general elections in Israel, Peres is hoping his visit will show voters at home that the peace process is reaping economic rewards.

His delegation to Oman and Qatar includes the head of the Industrialists' Association Dan Propper, the president of the chamber of commerce Dany Gillerman, Energy Minister Gonen Seguev and director general of the Finance Ministry David Brodet.

"Israel wants to establish an industrial cooperation and stimulate trade exchanges with Oman and Qatar," Yoav Biran, deputy director general of the Foreign Ministry, told Israel radio before the party left.

He said Qatar had already agreed in principle to the sale of liquefied natural gas to Israel in a deal struck with the US company Enron to import 2.5 million tonnes of gas from 2000.

Qatar

Qatar: Israel's Peres Arrives in Doha, Views Referendum Issue

TA0204095296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Peres' plane landed in Qatari capital of Doha about half an hour ago. The prime minister and his entourage were received in an official ceremony during which the Israeli national anthem was played. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that during the flight, Peres divulged that for the last few months he has been holding consultations with his party colleagues on the idea of holding a referendum before the permanent agreement with the Palestinians is approved. Answering a question posed by our correspondent if he is concerned that the proposal will vex the Palestinians, Mr. Peres said the issue can be seen as indicating that we are serious in our intention to reach a permanent agreement with the Palestinians. Peres divulged that he spoke with the Omani sultan about navigator Ron Arad. He said the Omanis showed a desire to help, but he does not believe they can help in the matter.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0900 GMT on 2 April adds: "Israel and Qatar will today establish diplomatic relations at the level of economic representations. Our envoy Gil Litman reports that Shim'on Peres has already met the emir of Qatar. Our correspondent reports that on the way to Doha, the prime minister's plane received authorization to fly through Abu Dhabi's airspace. During the flight the prime minister hinted that Israel is currently holding contacts in a bid to establish diplomatic relations with other Persian Gulf countries. In Doha, Peres will sign an agreement to open economic representations and an economic cooperation agreement."]

Qatar: Amir Receives Israel's Peres

JN0204123496 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1030 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the beloved amir of the country, received at his office in the Amiri Court at 1045 today His Excellency Shim'on Peres, Israeli prime minister and defense minister. The meeting was attended by His Highness Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, deputy prime minister and interior minister; His Excellency Muhammad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, minister of finance, economy, and trade; His Excellency Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, the foreign minister; His Excellency 'Abdallah bin-Khalifah al-'Atiyyah, chief of the Amiri Court. The meeting was attended on the Israeli side by his Excellency Energy Minister Gonen Segev and members of the accompanying delegation.

At the beginning of the meeting, his highness the beloved amir of the country welcomed His Excellency Shim'on Peres, Israeli prime minister, asserting that the visit comes within the framework of bolstering confidence-building measures among the various parties in the Middle East in order to realize comprehensive, just, and permanent peace in the region.

The two leaders also exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, chief of which is the Middle East peace issue and overcoming the obstacles facing the peace process. The two parties agreed to exchange trade representation offices.

His highness the amir of the country asserted that permanent peace is based on justice and finding comprehensive solutions on the various tracks, particularly on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, in implementation of the Madrid conference and Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 as well as the land-for-peace principle. This can be achieved by withdrawing from holy Jerusalem, the Golan, and southern Lebanon.

His highness expressed deep concern over the closure imposed on the Palestinian people, asserting the need to lift this closure and support the Palestinian National Authority. He also reiterated Qatar's firm position on the need to make the Middle east a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and to join the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, proceeding from the fact that comprehensive peace must ensure equal and balanced security rights for all parties. His highness the beloved amir of the country also explained Qatar's support for

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the steps taken at the peacemakers summit in Sharm al-Shaykh, voicing hope that all parties will support these steps.

His Excellency Shim'on Peres, the Israeli prime minister, arrived in Doha at 1015 today on an official one-day visit to the country at the invitation of the government. Leading those who received him on arrival at Doha International Airport were His Highness Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, deputy prime minister and interior minister; their excellencies the ministers; and head of the Shura Council.

Mr. Peres was accorded an official reception ceremony. When his excellency's plane came to a halt, Mr. Ibrahim al-Naji, chief of the Amiri court protocol boarded the plane to welcome the guest and escort him as he descended from the plane. His highness the deputy prime minister and interior minister welcomed His Excellency Shim'on Peres at the plane's ramp.

Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah Al Thani and His Excellency Shim'on Peres headed to the dais where they were given a military salute. The Israeli national anthem and the Qatari amiri anthem were then played. They then inspected the guard of honor which stood at attention in the airport.

After inspecting the guard of honor, His Excellency Shim'on Peres, escorted by His Highness Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, headed toward the senior figures who were present to greet the guest, who shook hands with them. After a short rest at the grand reception hall at Doha International Airport, the motorcade of his highness deputy prime minister interior minister and his excellency the Israeli prime minister left for the Amiri Court.

The official Israeli delegation includes Israeli Energy Minister Gonen Segev.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Weekly Cabinet Meeting Discusses Chechnya, West Bank

LD0104193696 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1740 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 1 Apr (SPA) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, deputy prime minister and commander of the National Guard, expressed the deep concern of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques, over the continuation of the Israeli siege imposed on the West Bank.

His royal highness, God safeguard him, said these Israeli measures blocked the peace process and put the Palestinian people to the forefront of problems, most important of which were the fragmentation of the West Bank, the infrastructure of the Palestinian agriculture, and the increase in the unemployment rate. He called for these measures to be reconsidered to enable the Palestinian people to practice their legitimate rights.

This came at the ministerial council's session, which was chaired by Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and held this afternoon at Yamamah palace in Riyadh.

His excellency Dr. Fu'ad Bin-'Abd-al-Salam al-Farisi, minister of information, informed SPA in his usual statement at the end of the session that his gracious highness expressed the hope of Saudi Arabia that the negotiations of the final settlement, to start in the second half of May between the Palestinian authorities and Israel, will lead to results serving the peace process and preparing an atmosphere of security and stability in the region.

His excellency added that the crown prince reviewed the situation in Chechnya, expressing the pain and concern of Saudi Arabia over the situation there and called for the disputes to be resolved by peaceful and constructive dialogue aimed at putting an end to the conflict in Chechnya, which will ensure the right of the Chechen people for freedom, dignity, security, and independence. [passage omitted]

The minister of information said that the Council of Ministers discussed the issues on the agenda and made the following decisions:

1. After taking cognizance of the incoming papers from the Office of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, containing his royal highness the foreign minister's cable on a draft protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and after taking cognizance of the aforementioned draft protocol, the council decided to approve the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Belarus, and to delegate the custodian of the two holy mosques' ambassador in Moscow to sign the protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Belarus and Saudi Arabia. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Editorial Views Israel's Refusal To Join IAEA

JN0104211696 Al-Dammam AL-YAWM in Arabic 31 Mar 96 p 7

[Editorial: "The Negev Reactor Is Threatening Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Many countries quickly joined the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] to

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place their nuclear programs under inspection, to create an atmosphere of confidence, and to give an opportunity for peace.

But Israel refuses to place its nuclear installations under the IAEA's inspection, although evidence, as well as public statements, reveal that it has nuclear installations, as well as bombs that are ready for use.

This Israeli refusal is considered an insult to the IAEA, its capability, and its principles and mission. Moreover, it encourages many states to ignore the IAEA and bypass its recommendations as long as a state, which claims to be protecting man and spreading peace and democracy, is flagrantly violating the IAEA's missions.

Reports say these days that a disaster is expected from the Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev desert because the reactor still uses outdated technology and lacks periodic international monitoring to verify the safety of its installations. Experts may find serious violations if the reactor's practices and installations are placed under international inspection, and this in turn may prevent a disaster for the Arabs and the Israelis alike.

It seems that the Israelis are working to keep nuclear weapons in their hands, not for any of the pretexts they claim, but due either to the criminal instinct which characterizes Israeli action, or to purposes of prestige. This is because the Israeli nuclear weapon has no practical justifications in any future confrontation with the Arabs since Israel is small in area and it is unimaginable to use nuclear weapons against military positions that have military impact on Israel without Israel itself be harmed. Second, the Arab area is huge and has a broad strategic depth, so any Israeli nuclear strike will be useless and ineffective in several areas.

This means that Israel keeps a weapon for prestige or deterrence, nothing else. This will practically lead many Arab and non-Arab countries in the Middle East to try to produce nuclear weapons under the pretext that Israel has nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Israeli nuclear weapons give these countries the legitimacy to produce and develop nuclear weapons and to hide these weapons from international inspection under the pretext that Israel is doing the same and no pressures were employed on it to place its nuclear program under international inspection similar to the pressures on North Korea.

Israel's possession of nuclear weapons is an obstacle to peace in the Middle East because the Israeli nuclear programs increase doubts and apprehensions and do not serve peace, good intentions, and joint confidence which should become the pillars of a lasting peace.

It is unimaginable to have real and lasting peace between two parties, one of which develops nuclear weapons without being inspected or questioned, and another party who the international agencies specify for it the positions of its forces. This does not serve peace, and no peace, in which there are preferential treatments in the manner we see between the Arabs and Israel, will last.

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Iraq: Possible 'Obstruction' of UN Arms Investigation Panel Seen

MM0104151996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 1 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Khalil Matar: "Signs of New Crisis Between Iraq and United Nations"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New York — High-ranking and authoritative UN sources have said that Iraq is refusing to provide an official familiar with Iraqi armament programs to be questioned about these programs, and that this matter could lead to the tasks of the commission entrusted with dismantling Iraqi mass-destruction weapons being obstructed.

The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Lieutenant General 'Amir al-Sa'di, who was introduced before as a specialist in missile programs only and who played down the importance of the progress in [Iraqi] biological programs whenever the issue was raised, is now, as far as the commission is concerned, the most important person concerned with the biological programs, as well as the chemical and missile issues.

The sources say that the commission tried over the past few weeks to meet with al-Sa'di, who went to New York and met with the special commission after the departure of Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz some three months ago. He had met with its officials in 'Aziz' presence. However, the Iraqis continue to tell the commission that al-Sa'di is busy these days and that he will not be available before 5 April. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Rumors Said To Surround Barzan al-Tikriti's Reported Amman Visit

MM0204105296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 2 Apr 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Barzan Sells His Property in Jordan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Reliable Iraqi and Jordanian sources said in Amman yesterday that Barzan al-Tikriti, Iraq's representative to the UN's European headquarters in Geneva and half brother of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, has visited Jordan secretly without going to Baghdad.

The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Barzan sold his property in Amman, finalized some private matters without making any political contacts with Jordanian officials, and then returned to his work in Geneva.

The sources said that the Iraqi official did not visit the Iraqi Embassy in Amman, nor did he meet with the ambassador. The sources pointed out that the visit took place before the arrival in Jordan of former Iraqi Chief of Staff Nizar al-Khazraji, who is currently residing in Amman, where he traveled from Ankara, Turkey.

Barzan al-Tikriti has in the past expressed his opposition to what he termed 'Udayy's — Saddam Husayn's eldest son — domination of power and his interference in numerous issues, which made Barzan look like an opponent of the Iraqi regime despite his position as Iraq's representative in Geneva.

Opposition observers do not rule out that Barzan could have carried out secret intelligence missions, especially as he was reported to have headed an intelligence organ in Europe [sabaqa tawallih li jihaz istikhbarat fi urubba]. Moreover, some British newspapers reported that he had implemented a $10-million informational plan to improve Iraq's image in Europe.

For their part, official Jordanian circles have denied any knowledge of the visit. They said that, if it is true, he probably used a passport with a different name. The circles paid no attention to the information about the visit.

Other sources do not rule out that Barzan al-Tikriti could have made some inquiries about a sum totaling several millions of dollars, quantities of gold and jewelry, and secret documents left behind by Husayn Kamil, the Iraqi president's son-in-law, who defected to Jordan last year and then returned to Baghdad in February this year only to be murdered along with the rest of his family.

Kamil left the money and the documents with a person whose identity was probably uncovered during the Iraqi Government's interrogation of the murdered son-in-law.

Iraqi opposition circles say that the Iraqi president's half brother is running a large secret network responsible for investing Iraqi money abroad and is in charge of the Iraqi foreign intelligence organ [yudur jihaz al-mukhabarat al-'iraqi al-khariji].

Iraq: Al-Hakim Interviewed on Damascus Opposition Forum Aims

MM0104131696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 Apr 96 p 4

[Interview with Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, head of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, by Ibrahim Humaydi in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Humaydi] What are the new developments which necessitated a meeting of the opposition at this particular time?

[Al-Hakim] Opposition meetings are nothing new. As opposition, we meet from time to time in Damascus,

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Tehran, or anywhere else. At present, it has been concluded that the circumstances through which Iraq is passing are suitable for some serious action after the appearance of many signs of the regime's weakness and of the people's and Army's aspiration to change. That is why the deliberation meeting falls in the context of a practical program for change.

[Humaydi] But it has been noted that the agreement to hold the meeting came after extensive Syrian-Iranian talks.

[Al-Hakim] Syrian-Iranian meetings are nothing new considering that Iraq neighbors these two states and that its situation has regional and international dimensions. It is, therefore, natural that the two states should show interest in the Iraqi people, their conditions, and all developments in the region and in Iraq.

[Humaydi] It seems that there is a regional agreement to hold the meeting, particularly as it comes in the wake of the talks held by Iranian Vice President Dr. Hasan Habibi and Mohammad Agha Mohammadi, the official in charge of the Iraqi file, with senior Syrian officials.

[Al-Hakim] We talked about this meeting exactly two years ago and then during my previous visit last summer, but certain complications affected the arrangements for the meeting.

It is true that Dr. Habibi discussed that issue in his talks with the Syrian brothers but that was in the course of the discussion of several other issues. I emphasize that I originally raised the idea two years ago, and it was agreed to hold the meeting. Brother Talabani (Jalal, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) and the political and Islamic forces approved.

[Humaydi] It has been said that your move and the Syrian support came after Jordan became involved in the Iraqi file and proposed a plan for change.

[Al-Hakim] I do not believe that is true, because there is a need for real change in the Iraqi situation. Such an important issue cannot be subject to this or that plan, and I do not believe that there is such a thing as a Jordanian plan.

[Humaydi] So what would you call the Jordanian moves?

[Al-Hakim] I have said that the Iraqi issue is important and affects regional security and the international situation. Furthermore, nobody can remain silent about the Iraqi people's suffering, least of all Iraq's neighbors who are affected by the internal situation in Iraq. For example, there has been large-scale emigration from Iraq to Iran, Jordan, and Syria. The situation in Iraq could explode and that would affect the states of the region. The interest shown by these states is obvious. A lack of interest would be condemned because the Iraqi people are Muslim Arab people and their suffering, with the continuation of dictatorship and oppressive policies, is quite clear.

[Humaydi] What is your position on calls for the partition of Iraq or the return of the Hashemite monarchy to that country?

[Al-Hakim] I have heard about the former but not the latter. I have followed King Husayn's speeches but did not notice any call for the return of the Hashemite crown. As regards calls for partition, such calls have been made in the Iraqi arena. The Kurdish brothers in Kurdistan have raised the partition idea. These ideas do exist in the world. They talk about an administrative situation. Whether that would suit the Iraqi situation or not is a different matter.

We believe that if what is meant by federalism is religious, sectarian, or nationalistic divisions, then that would be dangerous and would not serve the Iraqi people's interests. However, if the aim is administrative federalism, in the sense that the unity of the Iraqi territory, government, and people would be preserved with administrative decentralization or application of the provincial system used in the Islamic state, then that would serve the Iraqi people's cause and it would be a matter for the Iraqi people to decide. Such an important matter cannot be imposed by an opposition organization or an opposition figure. When the Iraqis are free to make their own decisions they will make a decision on this important issue. That system could perhaps solve some internal problems.

[Humaydi] It seems that the position on federalism is a central point of disagreement between the opposition forces.

[Al-Hakim] There are differences of opinion on many issues but that does not lead to collision. There is disagreement on some issues such as the repayment of debts and the blockade. If federalism means partition, that would be rejected by all the opposition forces. No party accepts partition or division. Even the Kurdish brothers have said that they underscore Iraq's unity and would not accept partition of Iraq.

[Humaydi] What makes the deliberation meeting different from the previous opposition meetings in Beirut, Vienna, and Salah-al-Din?

[Al-Hakim] The previous meetings were conferences including everyone, and were different in their programs and the number of those attending. Policies, views, and general political lines were proposed. The deliberation

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meeting is specific and will discuss practical and executive issues pertaining to practical and field matters.

It is, therefore, different in substance but it is also a complementary step to these meetings.

[Humaydi] Is it not in conflict with the frozen Unified Iraqi National Congress?

[Al-Hakim] It is not in conflict with anything. There is agreement that we shall take no action against anyone at this stage. We work against the regime and do not want to work against any other party.

[Humaydi] What would the deliberation meeting do for your call for the formation of an opposition field command?

[Al-Hakim] That would be up to the conferees. A field command is one of the ideas proposed in the practical program. Views must be heard.

[Humaydi] They seem to have supported that openly.

[Al-Hakim] I have not heard that. It would be a good omen, if true. They agree on field work but have not raised the field command issue, and I have not heard from any party that it supports that.

[Humaydi] Why was the "nationalist trend" which represents central Iraqi not invited?

[Al-Hakim] I understand central Iraq to mean Baghdad. Some Baghdad people are attending the meeting.

[Humaydi] But it seems that Mash'an al-Juburi, leader of the al- Watan [Homeland] Party, has announced a nationalist trend including others.

[Al-Hakim] We are all nationalists. None of the invited trends is not nationalist. I do not expect a foreign trend and I do not expect that we would be dealing with foreigners. Those invited to the deliberation meeting represent all Iraq — the south, the center, the north, the west, and the east.

[Humaydi] Do you believe that the statements to be issued at the conclusion of your meeting will be transformed into reality or will they have the same fate as in the past?

[Al-Hakim] We will make great efforts to ensure that and to ensure the meeting's success. The Iraqi regime is weak and the Army is really looking forward to salvation. The tragedy of the Iraqi people cannot possibly be confined to the Iraqi borders and it is bound to affect the region and the international situation and to arouse the interest of all neighboring states in joint action for change and for serving the interests of the Iraqi people and the region.

[Humaydi] Do you intend to make efforts to reconcile Talabani and Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party?

[Al-Hakim] We have, up to a few days ago, made continuous efforts for their reconciliation, and there has been much progress. I have received a cable indicating much progress of positive dimensions between them.

[Humaydi] One of the problems facing the opposition is the lack of a common concept in the neighboring states about Iraq's future.

[Al-Hakim] I do not believe that to be true. It is an impression given by the Arab press. The neighboring states are in agreement on nonacceptance of Saddam and his regime. There was a negative trend for years. Jordan had good relations with Iraq but its relations with the regime have deteriorated sharply. The Gulf states have maintained their firm position and so have Syria, Iran, and Turkey which extended the UN forces mandate (for Western air forces). There is no disagreement between the regional states on the attitude toward Baghdad. There may be disagreement on tactics and methods of work, which is natural.

[Humaydi] But the disagreement is over Iraq's future and the mechanism for change.

[Al-Hakim] There is agreement that there should be a great popular contribution to the future government but some imperialist states which are trying to impose their hegemony on Iraq pose a problem.

[Humaydi] Some Iraqi oppositionists have said that they would like Syria to open its borders with Iraq.

[Al-Hakim] I do not believe that the Syrian leadership would take any position harmful to the Iraqi people's interests. The question of opening the borders depends on the circumstances. The brothers in Syria care about the Iraqi people, much to their credit.

Iraq: Non-Proliferation Unjustly Favors Israel

96LH0164A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 1, 2

["Opinion" column by Salah al-Mukhtar]

[FBIS Translated Text] An announcement was made for the first time on the night of 8 February 1996 about an advanced U.S.-Israeli project to produce laser guided missiles to intercept and destroy short-range missiles, like the Katyusha, before they reach their targets. Western sources described this development as important, raising U.S.-Israeli military cooperation to a very advanced level.

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The United States and Israel have also cooperated in a program to produce a missile called "Arrow" to intercept medium-range missiles. The United States has financed and used its best experts to produce this missile. Therefore, if we add the first serious development to the second very serious one, we can understand a very important fact: the United States is working openly and seriously to enable the Zionist entity to possess missiles against short- and medium-range missiles. The presence of these missiles is designed to neutralize Arab missiles and render them ineffective, unless the Arabs develop their missiles to avoid interception by Israeli missiles.

The seriousness of this development increases if we remember that the Zionist entity has refused to sign the UN nuclear non-proliferation treaty. It has also refused to allow the inspection of its nuclear installations, despite the existence of Western information that it possesses more than 200 nuclear warheads.

What do all these very serious developments mean? First, we must remember the destruction of Iraq's strategic weapons and link that with these developments. Then it becomes easy for anyone to understand that attacking Iraq and destroying its strategic weapons were an essential part of the process to prepare the Zionist entity to unilaterally possess mass destruction weapons through which it can impose an era of slavery on all the Arabs, without exception. This is because the existence of any kind of mass destruction weapons in any Arab country will make it impossible for the Zionist entity to implicitly threaten to use them and will turn them into mere steel, according to the principle of "mutual deterrence."

Furthermore, the existence of a mass destruction weapon in any Arab country is a guarantee against any mass annihilation catastrophe in the area. The reason is simple and understandable: any use of mass destruction weapons by the Zionist entity or the Arabs will cause an unimaginable catastrophe in the Zionist entity, because the geographical area for a war in the area is very limited. This will allow deadly radiation to spread in directions that cannot be determined or controlled.

Consequently, the strategy of the Zionist entity, supported by the United States, has been based on two principles. The first is to prevent the Arabs from possessing mass destruction weapons. The second is to prevent them from possessing medium-range missiles that can carry a nuclear, chemical, or an ordinary warhead. Without these principles, the Zionist entity could face destruction from within without wars.

Will some Arab rulers understand the reasons for U.S. insistence on destroying Iraq's mass destruction weapons and missiles? Two related operations are taking place simultaneously: strengthening Israel's missile and nuclear capabilities and destroying the Arab missile, nuclear, and chemical capabilities. This is taking place with explicit American approval. This reminds us that the destruction of Egypt's missile and nuclear capabilities took place as part of the same strategy and for the same purpose.

The United States is not content with this. It is giving Israel all the conventional and nonconventional military means to enable it to impose its conditions and leadership in the Arab world. It is strange that known big powers — some of which participated in the war against Iraq and continued their participation, after the cease-fire, in the operations to disarm Iraq on the pretext of implementing the UN resolutions — are keeping silent now, although they see the developments that are taking place on the military level in Israel and although they realize the dangers threatening the security of the area and the world because of it. We have not heard Britain, France, Germany, or Russia demanding that the mass destruction weapons be removed from Israel or criticizing its insistence on developing its nuclear and missile arsenal and increasing its military budget, despite the clear collapse of the Arab states' military power and the existence of a serious military imbalance in the region. Is there any convincing explanation to this duplicity? Can we disregard the fact that UN Resolution 687 called for the removal of the mass destruction weapons from all the countries in the area, beginning with Iraq? What is happening totally contradicts this resolution. Does this not show a selective treatment of the UN resolutions by big powers other than the United States?

Last and not least, is there any official in the big power states who does not know that Israel has refused to implement more than 200 UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, encouraged by the United States and the indifference of the permanent member states — apart from the dissolved Soviet Union, which used to criticize Israel's rejection? Why haven't sanctions or a blockade been imposed on Israel like those imposed on Iraq on the pretext of not implementing the Security Council resolutions? These developments clearly, unambiguously, and without illusions show that the United States is trying to impose absolute Israeli hegemony in the area to serve America's strategic interests. This is not strange. No one expects anything different from a country that killed one million Iraqis and hundreds of thousands of Arabs. However, what is strange is the silence shown by the big powers about the worst attempt to sew the seeds of a future war. Can we expect criticism—at least criticism for the serious violation of the regional strategic balance—by the big powers, which are urging Iraq to implement the UN res-

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olutions? Or is the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy limited to Iraq and the Arabs? These are questions all the Iraqis and the Arabs are asking, and they will define the directions of future Arab thinking.

Iraq: Hashemite Intentions Said Worrying Saddam Husayn

96LH0141A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 7 Jan 96 p 27

[Unattributed article: "Saddam Husayn Did Not Feel Hashemite 'Threat' Until Husayn Kamil's Defection"]

[FBIS Translated Text] By the time the coup makers finished washing the blood of the victims they had dragged and killed in the July 1958 coup out of their hands, the royal Hashemite family of Iraq had been wiped out altogether. The only survivors were a young child, namely the son of the maternal aunt of King Faysal II: Prince Zayd, the brother of King Faysal I; and Ra'd, Prince Zayd's son who lives in Jordan far from the concerns of politics and who focuses his efforts on charitable associations and on the causes of the disabled and of people afflicted with malignant diseases.

The Hashemites of Iraq were not a tribe or a clan and they did not establish any party. During the years when they were in power, they ruled as a group of noblemen out of touch with the popular tendencies. This is why they left no trace behind when they were uprooted in the aforementioned July coup. Their supporters and followers were scattered over Jordan, Britain, and some Arab countries.

In Jordan, the Hashemites have ruled the country directly, especially in the era of King Husayn, the present monarch, which began in the early 1950's. They have concentrated all authority and power in their hands. The Hashemites in Iraq were just a front. Iraq's notables and parties alternated in ruling Iraq with their tendencies, programs, and policies, which were not necessarily compatible with the royal family's tendencies.

The July coup was an end and a beginning. It ended the Hashemites' rule in Iraq, leaving no trace of them, except for their cemeteries, which were neglected and which turned into ruins with the passage of time, and some sympathizers who have disappeared with the passage of time. The doors to a new conflict were opened. Military coups and counter coups were staged by leftist, communist, and pan-Arabist parties, and it has not been proven that the Hashemites had any trace in those coups.

Therefore, coup created regimes, beginning with 'Abd-al-Karim Qasim's regime, the regimes of 'Abd-al-Salam 'Arif and his brother 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif, Hasan al-Bakr's regime, and ending with Saddam Husayn's regime, were not worried by any Hashemite concern. They kept on moving either closer to or further from Jordan, depending on the successive Arab axes and the western countries' influence in the region, but they remained far from the Hashemites' old connections with Iraq.

There is no doubt that the popular tendency in Iraq yearned, whenever extremely frustrated after ambitious wagers on any of the coup created regimes, for that era when the constitutional monarchy was the type of government adopted to rule the country, but matters never went beyond the bounds of nostalgia. It has not been proven that the Hashemite family has actual mainstays in Iraq.

If we consider the forces that have continued to influence the course of the old and new developments in Iraq throughout more than three decades, we would find that these forces have had no relations with the Hashemite family and that they are all absolutely hostile to this family and consider it conservative, pro-West, and hostile to liberationist and pan-Arabist aspirations and hopes!

This position applies to the communist party, which was tantamount to the back-seat driver during 'Abd-al-Karim Qasim's administration; to the Ba'th Party; the Nasirist tendency, which emerged during 'Abd-al-Salam and 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Arif's administration; to the Kurds; and to the Shi'ites, who have been more preoccupied with the effort to improve their conditions and positions than with the Hashemite family's aspirations and ambitions in Iraq.

However, if the talk about the Hashemites and Iraq is intended to mean King Husayn and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, considering that there is no actual trace of the Hashemites beyond this circle, then we must remember that throughout the 1950 and 1960's, the Jordanian monarch was in a defensive position vis-a-vis the pressure exerted by 'Abd-al-Nasir and the pan-Arabist and leftist tendencies. We must also remember that in the 1970's, rather in the second half of the 1960's, King Husayn engaged in a bitter struggle for survival with the Palestinian national movement, which surfaced with the creation of the PLO and grew with the growth of the fedayeen action in wake of the June 1967 war.

Since the collapse of the Hashemite throne in Iraq, King Husayn has not been given the opportunity to think or work beyond the sphere of preserving his family's rule

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in Jordan. The winds of change have continued to blow, one time from the north and another from the west. No sooner did he emerge from one battle than he got into another. He has been on the defensive from 1958 to this time.

This is why the succession of rulers who ruled Iraqi throughout this period have not been confronted with a Hashemite phenomenon inside or outside Iraq. This condition continued until Saddam Husayn, the current president, assumed power and threw his country, first, into the eight-year war with Iran and then, into the tragedy of Kuwait's invasion, whose domestic and foreign ramifications continue to interact to this moment.

Throughout the years before Saddam, the Jordanian monarch felt that an iron curtain stood between him and Iraq. His memories of his family rule there began to dim with time so that they became like a flicker of light at the end of a dark tunnel. With the arrival of the current Iraqi president and with the embroilment of Iraq in the war with Iran, those memories began to be revived and renewed but without being transformed into determination to regain a lost rule.

This is why, in light of this climate and these givens, Saddam did not feel that King Husayn posed a domestic threat to him, even though he has been aware of the strong nostalgia that pulls the Jordanian monarch toward his cousins' lost glory in Iraq. Saddam did not feel such a threat until he was defeated in the second Gulf war.

Iraq's national unity has splintered. The north is now tantamount to an independent state and the south is beyond central government control during the night and during certain hours of the day. Social relations have broken down in the central region and Saddam Husayn fears now that the victorious western countries could agree on restoring the monarchy as a compromise that would satisfy the Shi'ites and the Kurds, would give the Sunna a respite, and would unite the disunited and quarreling tribes and clans.

Despite this fear, the Iraqi president, who has not felt the presence of any actual influence by the Hashemite family inside Iraq, has maintained self-restraint under the pressure of his interest in keeping his country's borders with Jordan open. He has done nothing surprising, except for a few actions whose true dimensions only King Husayn understands, such as preventing Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i from going to Jordan for medical care and denying a delegation from the Jordanian royal family the permission to participate in al-Khu'i's funeral when he died.

As soon as General Husayn Kamil defected to Jordan and King Husayn embraced him there and permitted him to hold a press conference at a royal palace in Amman, however, Saddam Husayn's past suspicions regarding the Hashemite story in Iraq turned into convictions, even though he has no real evidence.

Thus, because he has felt that memories of the Hashemite rule have been revived among the Iraqi public, Saddam has instructed his media to move promptly and to dig up the past in a manner that distorts this family's image in Iraq. The press has begun to publish previously unpublished stories about the royal family's moral, financial, and political excesses in Iraq.

Iraq: Views on Hashemites, Future of Iraq

96LH0142A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic
7 Jan 96 pp 28-29

[Interview with Mustafa Hamarinah, head of Jordanian University Strategic Studies Institute and former adviser at the Jordanian Royal Court, by Basil Ramsis; place and date not given; followed by reports by Nuri 'Abd-al-Razzaq, Ibrahim al-Disuqi Shata, and Walid Qudhayhah—first two paragraphs AL-MAJALLAH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—In the sea of interpretations, expectations, and possibilities emanating from General Husayn Kamil's defection to Jordan, there are those who project the possibility of the Hashemites' return to power in Iraq.

Because of the important, delicate, and sensitive nature of this issue, AL-MAJALLAH has chosen Mustafa Hamarinah, head of the Jordanian University's Strategic Studies Institute who previously worked as adviser at the Jordanian Royal Court, to ask him a number of questions in this regard. Following is the interview AL-MAJALLAH has conducted with Hamarinah:

[Ramsis] Do you find that there are actual bases for what is being projected about the Hashemites' return to Iraq?

[Hamarinah] No, not at all. There is no indication that King Husayn is working in this direction. It has not been proven at all the king has tried to organize social forces, whether in Iraq or in Jordan, to exert efforts to accomplish this end.

[Ramsis] Since the collapse of the Hashemite throne in Iraq in 1958, do you think that the Hashemites have had an opportunity to restore that throne?

[Hamarinah] Yes, the second Gulf war and the givens that prevailed at the time would have been a golden opportunity if King Husayn had wished to do such a thing.

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[Ramsis] Has this issue been raised by the Iraqis?

[Hamarinah] It has not been raised officially, of course. However, I know that some Iraqi intellectuals have given this question very limited consideration. Around February 1991, it was thought that the only way out of the crisis was the proclamation of an immediate federal union between Iraq and Jordan. However, this idea remained within the bounds of the circle of those who raised. It was not presented to any Jordanian or Iraqi official and nobody responded to it.

[Ramsis] What is your opinion and do you think that such an idea is acceptable?

[Hamarinah] This idea requires Jordanian approval. I believe that King Husayn realizes that no kind of Iraqi-Jordanian unity can be established unless under regional and international balances different from the existing ones.

The projection of a federal union between Jordan and Iraq means that Saddam Husayn's regime has to be overthrown first. It seems that such an overthrow is not in the picture to date, not insofar as the regional powers or the international powers are concerned.

[Ramsis] You have said that an opportunity loomed in the horizon for the return of the Hashemites to Iraq, but you have not said how.

[Hamarinah] I believe that King Husayn did not move to exploit his immense popularity, which peaked in the early 1990's, because to start, he is not working to restore his family's rule to Iraq. Three elements — namely his position on the second Gulf war, the democratic changes in Jordan, and the popular sympathy demonstrated in wake of his well-known surgery — collaborated to raise King Husayn's popular credit to its peak, but the King did not move to exploit this credit, especially in connection with Iraq.

[Ramsis] Is it possible to raise the question of an Iraqi-Jordanian federation anew?

[Hamarinah] Everything has ended now. International and regional conditions have changed. Considering that King Husayn did not make a move when the circumstances were opportune, then it is certain that he will not move now under the umbrella of these difficult and complex conditions.

[Ramsis] Then why has King Husayn embraced General Husayn Kamil Hasan and received him in this manner?

[Hamarinah] I have no answer to this perplexing question, and I cannot offer a responsible and final answer, even though numerous "scenarios" are being circulated.

[Ramsis] If the blockade goes on and Iraq explodes, what will Jordan do?

[Hamarinah] Nothing. Jordan has not tried to organize the popular sympathy which developed in Iraq, especially during the Iraq-Iran war. I believe that if Jordan wants to have any role in Iraq, it has to reach an understanding with the states surrounding Iraq.

[Ramsis] Don't you think that if Iraq's unity becomes actually threatened, then a Jordanian role will become a regional and international demand?

[Hamarinah] Excluding Iran, I don't think that the region's states will agree to any distinguished Jordanian role in Iraq. Iran has submitted the possibility of an understanding with Jordan regarding future conditions in Iraq. However, King Husayn has not responded to this wish. I do not know the reason.

[Ramsis] Do you think that the United States and the West support a distinguished Jordanian role in the Iraqi issue?

[Hamarinah] These countries are not concerned with King Husayn, Jordan, Iraq, or any other country or head of state. All they are concerned with is to secure their interests. My opinion is that the conditions in Iraq will remain frozen as they are until after the upcoming 1996 U.S. elections. This blockade will not be eliminated or altered, Saddam Husayn will not be replaced; and nothing will be done before this date.

Nuri 'Abd-al-Razzaq: Iraqi Society Has Changed and It Has No Place for Hashemites

"Since the July 1958 revolution, there have been numerous developments in the Iraqi political situation and social structure. There has been a change in the form of the classes. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine the return of Hashemites to rule Iraq."

This is what has been emphasized by Nuri 'Abd-al-Razzaq, secretary of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization in Egypt. He pointed out that the issue has been raised for discussion in the arena because of the tragic deterioration of conditions in Iraq at all levels. He noted the loss of the government mechanism in the geographically divided Iraq and the fact that the Iraqi people have dropped below the poverty line at a time when Iraq is an oil-rich country.

Nuri 'Abd-al-Razzaq added that the issue of the Hashemites' return to Iraq is tied to the issue of the Iraqi society's unity and to the emergence of numerous problems, led by the Kurdish issue; the sectarian issue, which President Saddam Husayn has nurtured; and the emergence of a number of ethnic groups. Nuri

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said, "The Hashemite question, projected as a scenario for change in Iraq, has emerged despite the absence of any influential force demanding the return of the Hashemites. To start, there is no plan by a political movement that embraces this idea and that has a program which projects it." As for the Jordanian projection, Nuri 'Abd-al-Razzaq agrees that there is Jordanian ambition to rule Iraq is present and that Jordan, as a regime, and particularly King Husayn, has its influence and its significant role in the development of conditions in Iraq due to several reasons. These include the fact that Jordan is not a party to the regional, pan-Arab, or sectarian conflicts; that it has no partisan extensions in Iraq in order to try to enable one party to overpower another; and that it has no sectarian or tribal extension there.

Finally, because Jordan has been involved in the Iraqi society's fabric through the first Gulf war and its support for Saddam Husayn in the Kuwait war, Nuri 'Abd-al-Razzaq has asserted that the recent position Jordan has taken vis-a-vis the Husayn Kamil al-Majid must be a position welcomed in Iraqi society because it is, as Nuri characterizes it, a "moderate rational position."

Nuri 'Abd-al-Razzaq agreed with the scenario that it is unlikely the royal Hashemite rule will return to Iraq, expressing reservations on any future developments.

Regarding rivalry for the Hashemite inheritance between King Husayn, Prince 'Ali Bin Husayn, who lives in London, and 'Adil Bin Muhammad al-Hashimi, 'Abd-al-Razzaq noted that 'Ali Bin Husayn, who can present himself as the legitimate heir to the Hashemite rule in Iraq, does not agree with King Husayn.

Nuri 'Abd-al-Razzaq proceeded from this point to say that the issue of the Hashemites' return is not an original issue and that it is raised within a number of projected scenarios: "The Hashemites' return, Kurdish and Shi'ite federations, and other scenarios."

He said that the most conspicuous development since the second Gulf war has been Husayn Kamil al-Majid's defection because he represents one of the pillars of Saddam Husayn's regime.

'Abd-al-Razzaq stressed that a Hashemite return to Iraq will provoke neighboring countries that have no interest in such a return. He has expressed the belief that King Husayn understands this situation and is content with his ambition, which he will not try to achieve because the circumstances don't permit it.

Ibrahim al-Disuqi Shata's Views

Who are the Hashemites? This is how Ibrahim al-Disuqi Shata, a history professor at Cairo University, started his words. Answering the question posed raised, Shata said:

"If you look for the Hashemites, you will find on the Islamic world map a large number of people who claim to be Hashemites. Even if some of them are proven to descend from this line, would this lineage give them legitimacy as rulers? Is it not acknowledged that the Hashemites ruled Iraq in the wake of World War I within the framework pre-drawn political plans whose source is well known? If the Hashemites wish to play the same role again, then in whose interest will they play it? What succeeded in 1914 will not necessarily succeed at the end of the century. Being a Hashemite does not give one the legitimate right to rule any Islamic country."

Shata said that he believes that the idea is projected within the context of the restoration of monarchies to the world, the way the idea of the return of Muhammad 'Ali's family to rule Egypt and the return of al-Sinusi family to rule Libya is projected at times.

He noted that the very projection of this scenario disregards a decisive factor, namely the military establishment's domination. Therefore, the only solution is to "impose" this scenario.

Shata added, "I fear that the projected scenario toward which the developments point is partition because major entities in the Arab and Islamic world are being divided into smaller entities. Iraq could be divided into three states: Kurdish, Shi'ite, and Sunni."

He further added, "The Hashemites do not have the ability to control Iraq's warring factions and they cannot impose a regime acceptable to the three main forces: Kurdish, Shi'ite, and Sunni."

Shata pointed out that tribal dimensions are found in every projected scenario, noting, however, that the tribes [illegible] loyalty to the Hashemites.

[illegible] that the Iraqi opposition abroad is involved in serving the interest of the partition scenario, especially since it possesses no military force to make it eligible to play any role in tackling any scenario.

Walid Qudhayhah: Recourse Is Syria, Not Jordan

Walid Qudhayhah, a professor of political science at the American University of Cairo, was a leader of the Arab Nationalist Movement in the late 1950's and early 1960's. He started his interview with us by pointing out that the "Hashemites' return is projected by some Iraqi opposition forces and figures, especially those connected

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with the monarchic era prior to the July 1958 revolution. It is also projected, somewhat shyly, by some Jordanian figures firmly connected to the Jordanian monarch. Often, the issue is raised more implicitly than explicitly. In Amman, there are whispers regarding this issue."

Qudhayhah finds this scenario unlikely. He has said, "When we view the Arab arena, we find influential forces and countries that have their power in the region. These major countries are not inclined toward a Hashemite solution in Baghdad. A Hashemite presence will upturn the balances of power in favor of Iraq and Jordan and against Syria. Egypt will view such a solution as a strong threat to its leadership role.

"Moreover, who are the supporting forces? There is a tiny part of the Iraqi opposition that supports this solution, plus Husayn Kamil because of his current presence in the Jordanian capital." Other than these, Qudhayhah emphasized the absence of any influential forces that support this projection, including the Kurds who reject strongly.

Moreover, non-Arab powers such as Turkey and Iran, i.e. the powers surrounding Iraq, don't support this solution. Qudhayhah added, "The United States does not aspire for a Hashemite presence in Baghdad. The Americans don't aspire for more than what exists because it is the best for their national interests." As for Israel, Qudhayhah pointed out that continuation of the existing conditions is best for it.

Answering a question on Clinton's wish to resolve the Iraqi situation so he can use this as a card in the upcoming presidential elections, Qudhayhah denied the influence of this factor. He noted that the U.S. Administration's foreign policy does not influence the American voter's tendencies, except in what pertains to Israel, which is due to the strong Zionist lobby in the United States. What primarily influences the U.S. voter is the economy and domestic issues.

Walid Qudhayhah asserted that the fluid situation in Iraq reassures Israel that Iraq represents no threat. He noted that stability is relative. Insofar as the West is concerned, the conditions are stable, even though they are not stable for the Iraqi people. As defined by Qudhayhah, stability from the U.S. perspective is the ability to control and contain.

As to what he sees as a most likely scenario, Qudhayhah said, "There is no real determination to topple Saddam. Baker's memoirs emphasize that Bush had no intention to topple Baghdad's regime."

Walid Qudhayhah considered another scenario to be likely—a scenario in which a coup is staged from within the regime. He said, "Such a coup has to be staged by Tikriti Ba'thists from within the regime. They are the only force by virtue of their absolute control of the army, the party, and the government remnants. Syria will be their ally."

Qudhayhah asserted that if this scenario materializes and succeeds, it will create a new situation in the region. If the Iraqi regime resorts to Syria, the Kurdish problem will be solved because Syria controls a broad segment of the Kurds. Iran will accept this solution by virtue of its good relations with Syria. The two countries will deal with the new regime as an allied or friendly power.

Going back to the Hashemite issue, Qudhayhah denied that the Husayn Kamil al-Majid incident has any connection with any scenario. He said:

"This incident indicates just one thing: King Husayn has played a game for which he had not made careful calculations. He believed that just be taking this position, the Gulf would rush to him with oil, thus replacing Iraq. This has not happened and the King has been compelled to send his commerce minister to Iraq to straighten things out."

Iraq: Hashemite Al-Sharif Bin Husayn Interviewed

96LH0140A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic
7 Jan 96 pp 24-26

[Interview with al-Sharif 'Ali Bin Husayn, member of the Hashemite family that ruled Iraq prior to the revolution, by Nora Fakhuri; place and date not given: "Al-Sharif 'Ali Bin Husayn to AL-MAJALLAH: Our Relations With Hashemites in Jordan Are Relations of Kinsmanship, Not Political Relations; There Is Broad Support Among Iraqis for Return of Monarchy; Jordanian Proposal To Partition Iraq Does Not Help Solution; Monarchic Regime Unites and Creates Confidence in All Circles"—first two paragraphs AL-MAJALLAH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] To get familiar with the position of a member of the Hashemite family that ruled Iraq prior to the revolution on the talk about the family's return to power in Baghdad, AL-MAJALLAH has conducted the following interview with al-Sharif 'Ali Bin Husayn who now lives in London.

Al-Sharif 'Ali emphasized that he believes that the monarchic regime is entitled to return to power in Iraq, expressing the belief that this return is demanded by the majority of the Iraqi people. At the same time, however, he pointed out that the Iraqi people reject the role that Jordan is playing to arrange this return, as they reject any other foreign intervention in Iraq's domestic affairs.

[Fakhuri] Since Husayn Kamil's defection from Iraq and since King Husayn held his press conference in

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which he talked at length and for the first time about the monarchic era and about the "cousins," a question has been raised regarding the return of monarchy and of the Hashemite rule to Iraq, whether embodied in King Husayn or in a Hashemite family member. We would like to know your opinion of the situation that has been evolving since Husayn Kamil's defection from Baghdad. What is your opinion of the return of monarchy or of the Hashemites to power in Iraq?

[Husayn] The issue of the return of constitutional monarchy to Iraq did not begin with Husayn Kamil's defection.

[Fakhuri] Does not monarchy mean the return of the Hashemite rule?

[Husayn] It is not accurate to define the return of monarchy to Iraq as the return of the Hashemite rule. Iraq's monarchy was not a Hashemite Iraqi monarchy. It was the Kingdom of Iraq. The Iraqi people's empathy and love for the Iraqi royal family is well known and old. Iraqis have good memories of the monarchic era, especially when compared with the republican era that has followed. This is why Iraqis are interested in the issue of the return of monarchy to Iraq. The question of the return of monarchy to Iraq has been present in the Iraqi arena since 14 July 1958. However, the deterioration of all aspects of social, economic, political, and legal life in Iraq has boosted the constitutional monarchic movement and the Iraqi people's interest in the return of monarchy to Iraq.

Jordan has no role in the monarchy, or in what you call the Hashemite monarchy, in Iraq. Jordan has no right and no justification to have a role in Iraq.

[Fakhuri] If we backtrack to 1958, we would find that King Husayn was the vice president of the union. Could he be advocating what you are advocating regarding a return to 1958 or the return of monarchy as the legitimate regime in Iraq?

[Husayn] There is no connection. King Husayn was the union vice president not the Iraqi monarch's regent. He was the Hashemite union's vice president. On the morning of 14 July, the late Prince 'Abdallah ['Abd-al-Ilah] was the crown prince. He, not King Husayn, was legally and constitutionally entitled to become the king after King Faysal II. King Husayn has no legal or popular role in Iraqi affairs.

The relationship between the Iraqi royal family and the Jordanian royal family is just a relationship of kinsmanship, not a political, legal, constitutional, or legitimate relationship. I believe that King Husayn has announced that he has no aspirations or ambitions in Iraq because he has no justification for them. Jordanian intervention in Iraqi affairs is rejected, and it does not exist.

[Fakhuri] Jordanian intervention in Iraqi affairs is obvious.

[Husayn] However, we reject it and it is rejected by Iraq because Iraqis don't want anybody to interfere in their affairs.

[Fakhuri] All the same, the Iraqi people's wish has not been fulfilled all these past years. Are we seeing lines or threads of apprehensions that you feel in connection with the return of a Hashemite regime to Iraq?

[Husayn] What you characterize as fear of the return of a Hashemite regime to Jordan is a concentrated fear of Jordanian intervention in Iraqi affairs, not fear of the return of monarchy to Iraq. There is no fear of Jordanian ambitions in Iraq, but there is fear of the return of a constitutional monarchy to Iraq. There is a big difference here. We fault past and current Jordanian political positions and we are not confident that Jordan has completely severed its relations with Iraq and with Saddam Husayn. Practically, the two governments continue to cooperate with each other.

We are leery of the Jordanian position and also of Jordanian ambitions in Iraq.

[Fakhuri] Has a suggestion been presented or submitted to you personally on the return of monarchy to Iraq as an option to solve the political crisis or the current government crisis in Baghdad? Have you been presented as an alternative?

[Husayn] Regarding our relationship with the opposition, there is a general unofficial agreement because the main objective is to topple the regime. When it is toppled, the Iraqi people will determine the regime that they want, be it monarchic or republican. In any case, the Iraqi people have to make the decision. One main condition that we have demanded is that the Iraqi people make the decision and that there be a referendum and a vote on the type of regime before constitutional monarchy is revived. The logic is that the choice belongs to the people. Therefore, our concern has been to agree with the opposition that the main objective is to topple the regime and to restore the Iraqi people's will.

As for our belief in the possibility of the return of the monarchy, we find broad support. The majority of Iraqis support the return of monarchy to Iraq.

[Fakhuri] What is your yardstick?

[Husayn] There is a very high rate of support for the idea among those whom we contact at home. There is

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no survey. However, 80 or 90 percent of them support the idea.

[Fakhuri] These could be people who are close to you.

[Husayn] No.

[Fakhuri] Do you have contacts with the common people?

[Husayn] We have contact with all segments and various factions of the Iraqi people from the north to the south, including intellectuals, tribes, and people from all walks of life in the Iraqi society. We have contacts even with people in the ruling establishment, with leaders, and with the military establishment. We have contacts with all circles. Reactions to a monarchic regime are very positive and very enthusiastic. The more we persevere, the greater the support we get and the more responsive people become day after day to the return of monarchy. In fact, we have reached a phase in which monarchy has become the only solution, but people are the decisionmakers. Our main task is to topple the regime.

[Fakhuri] The living reality is one thing and honesty another. The reality says that the only establishment capable of making any fundamental change in Iraq is the military establishment. What is your influence?

[Husayn] The difference between the constitutional monarchic movement and political parties is that political parties have political objectives and principles whereas the monarchic movement seeks to restore the monarchy to Iraq and to build a democratic constitutional state. This movement encompasses all Iraqi factions and it has a political base which is special, and I would not say narrow. Monarchy unites all parties and circles. The monarchic projection is the most comprehensive and it creates political, social, economic, and national confidence among all various parties in the Iraqi arena. Monarchy can create a climate of cooperation, participation, and contribution. This is insofar as monarchy's objectives are concerned. Practically, the influential circles in Iraq have to support the return of an Iraqi constitutional monarchy.

[Fakhuri] Are you saying that you have supporters in the army?

[Husayn] Yes. There are supporters in the army, in the ruling establishment, and among tribes and intellectuals. Now more than ever they believe that monarchy is the solution to Iraq's problems and to diminishing anarchy, to the threat of partition and of the division of Iraq among various militias, and to foreign intervention in Iraqi affairs.

The restoration of monarchy and support for an acceptable leader by all Iraqi factions will ensure Iraq's international survival. The guarantee of Iraqi state institutions and of the absence of severe conflict among the various factions is found in monarchy.

[Fakhuri] How well is this projection accepted internationally?

[Husayn] Regarding international acceptance, we always depend on God and on the Iraqi people. We deal with states on the basis of mutual respect. From the time our movement started as an organized movement, we have worked toward this end. I believe that our self-respect and our reliance on the Iraqi people have generated respect among countries for the constitutional monarchic movement. This is my opinion. We are now benefiting from this investment in the fact that the majority of countries have begun to gradually, but ever more strongly, believe that the return of monarchy to Iraq is the guarantee for stable decision-making and for the region's stability and security.

[Fakhuri] What about the U.S. position?

[Husayn] The Americans constantly reiterate that the Iraqi people are the ones who should decide what type of regime they want, but at the same time, they believe that the return of monarchy could be a factor for Iraq's stability. Gradually, they see that monarchy is the most likely solution. They, too, want stability. Jordan's involvement has created an undesirable climate. Despite the official statements on the ground, we find that Jordanian intervention and the raising of the question of the partition of Iraq into Kurdish, Sunni, and Shi'ite parts does not help solve the crisis or settle the conditions in Iraq. This is undesirable.

[Fakhuri] If a referendum were conducted among the Iraqi people and if the people did not choose you, what would your reaction be?

[Husayn] To begin, we launched this effort at the people's request to serve the country and the people. My involvement in the issue is in response to the national duty demanded by the people. We can say that the people support the return of the monarchy.

[Fakhuri] What are your ambitions?

[Husayn] My ambitions are to serve the people. If the people don't want this service, then it is up to them. The ambition for which I live is a stable, democratic, and free Iraq. I will perform any role, and I don't aspire for power.

[Fakhuri] If we were more realistic, would we see Iraq marching with you toward democracy in the next 20 years?

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[Husayn] I believe more than ever before in the possibility of development toward democracy in Iraq. The experience we have undergone has made Iraqis reject tyranny. Throughout the past three decades, we have all been the victims of Saddam Husayn's regime. We must defend each other. I believe that the people generally hold this opinion. What I mean is that the people don't want adventures and adventurers. Iraqis want to live in stability and security.

[Fakhuri] From your viewpoint, we understand that it is possible that a Hashemite monarchic regime will be restored, putting the emphasis on King Husayn or on a federation between Iraq and Jordan which King Husayn can control.

[Husayn] This is rejected regionally and at the Iraqi level. In Iraq, we don't need the country to be dominated by any party, even if it is Jordanian or Arab. Jordan's warm and firm relations with Saddam Husayn's regime have made Iraqis generally link Jordan with Saddam Husayn. The Jordanian Government's support for Saddam against the Iraqi people in various phases and in a variety of developments has made the Iraqis take a very negative position toward Jordan's role and toward the Jordanian Government's cooperation with and support for the Iraqi regime.

[Fakhuri] Is King Husayn entitled to return to power?

[Husayn] In modern Arab history, various unions were formed between countries in the region. Is everybody entitled to demand to be the president of another state on the basis of those varied federations and unions? The Hashemite union lasted a very short time and was a failure.

[Fakhuri] What about the formal legal opinion [fatwa] dispensed by al-Khu'i to the effect that King Husayn should be king?

[Husayn] To start, the maternal cousin is the heir in the Shi'ite creed, which obstructs paternal cousins from the inheritance. Imam al-Khu'i, the highest Shi'ite religious authority, could not have said such a thing.

[Fakhuri] It is said that a fatwa was dispensed in 1965 to the effect that Iraq must be ruled by a monarchy.

[Husayn] I have no knowledge of such a fatwa, but al-Khu'i was not the religious authority in 1965.

Iraq: Prices Drop; New Economic Stage Viewed

96LH0162D Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p 6

[Article by Salah al-'Abd: "Prices, the New Stage"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Undoubtedly, the large reduction that occurred in markets recently in various commodities and food prices was because of practical measures and actions that were taken. These included President Saddam Husayn's message to cabinet members on 2 December 1995, which touched the hearts of millions of our steadfast, fighting people. After their enervation by the circumstances of the iniquitous blockade, it brought joy to their souls.

Nearly all of us are no different, including all state agencies and many businessmen and professionals in the private sector, who have complied with these measures and who expressed in one way or another their desires to reduce prices and fees. It was a joyous expression of their nationalism, and it registered a noble position in the eyes of history for their people.

However, there are some observations in that area that must be noted. Despite that participation and the positive results achieved with regard to lowering prices, there are still some professionals and those who offer service amenities, especially in the private sector, who are dealing with citizens in the same spirit as before, and at old prices and fees, without any reduction or attempt to overcome the blockade's adversity. Those who work in those sectors have not climbed the ladder of true patriotism. Some examples include "inspection" contractors, automobile fuel dealers, and a number of others from the private sector.

Because of this unfortunate behavior and the persistence on this path, deterrent measures are required in order to put an end to this situation, and to bring to account those who refuse to reduce their prices in order to comply with the new stage. We hope that all of us will go along with the new situation with efficiency and optimism, so that we can fulfill our required national role during this stage.

Iraq: Drop in Food Prices Reported

96LH0162C Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Hiyam Ahmad: "Lower Prices Continue; Trade Ministry Continues To Offer Food"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Trade continues to offer large amounts of food, and household and electrical materials through sales windows at the Baghdad international Fair, as well as central markets located in Baghdad and the governorates.

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Zuhayr Matlab Salman, the director general of the Public Company for Central Markets, said that the middle men who purchase food and household and electrical materials and, then, sell them for high prices are the direct cause behind the bottlenecks, anarchy, and rising prices. He stated that the ministry's actions pertaining to food, including breaking down sacks of rice and sugar into small packages, was for the purpose of eliminating those middlemen and satisfying the citizens' food requirements.

Zuhayr 'Abd-al-Rahman, the director general of the Public Company for Grain Trade, urges marketeers to be bound by the system. As for the chaos that is accompanying distribution of sugar, Yusuf Muhsin al-'Afi, the director general of the Public Company for Food Trade, explained that the increase in demand, which has played a role in causing prices of sugar to rise on the local market during recent days, was the direct reason that a state of chaos and competition for buying has been created. He stressed that this condition will not continue, since large sacks of sugar will continue to be offered at low prices, in addition to the expected lowering of prices on the local market during the next few days. He said that prices of food offered at the Baghdad International Fair and the central markets — as of yesterday — were 9,000 Iraqi dinars [D] per sack of Vietnamese rice, weighing 50 kilograms; D7,000 per sack of Indian rice, weighing 50 kilograms; D900 per sack of Vietnamese rice, weighing 5 kilograms; and D1,250 for a sack of sugar, weighing 5 km. One par of Diwaniyah-brand automobile tires is D10,000, and a (35/40) ampere battery is D8,500.

Iraq: Medicine Prices High; Others Drop

96LH0160B Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 23

[Report by Husayn al-Sahir]

[FBIS Translated Text] The people have witnessed a major drop in the prices of all commodities, from bread to nonessential goods, like French perfumes. However, some goods have not matched the strength of the dinar and remained high because merchants have tried to circumvent the dinar's strength by exploiting existing conditions.

One commodity that has maintained its old blockade price is medicine. The pharmacies that sell rare medicines, not available in popular clinics and government pharmaceutical stores, are getting prices that are not much different from the prices that existed before our national economy regained some of its health when we tackled inflation.

Medicine merchants and those who help them promote drugs that are essential for treating the sick are trying to resist the Iraqi national will manifested in President Leader Saddam Husayn's message on 2 December 1995. They are also trying to rob Iraq by exploiting the blockade conditions and the great need for medicines.

We call on the officials in the Health Ministry to intervene immediately and pursue these individuals, with the help of the other responsible authorities. One thing is certain: the Health Ministry's decision to supply the largest quantity of medicines, through its health departments, to meet the needs of the citizens will be an important factor in stopping attempts to fleece ill people and their relatives. We have many sick people because of the starvation and deprivation caused by the more than 2,000-day blockade.

We must point out here also that most of the doctors are still demanding the same fees they demanded from their patients before the policy to combat inflation was launched and before the dinar regained its purchasing power.

We call upon the pharmacists, doctors, and private taxi drivers to reconsider their prices because average prices have dropped by more than 75 percent compared with what they were before. However, people in these three professions are still refusing to lower their prices. Urgent measures are needed to force these people to comply with the new economic realities.

Iraq: High Prices of Medicines Noted

96LH0160A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 43

[FBIS Translated Text] How can the prices of all consumer, luxury, and durable goods and the prices of all kinds of automobiles come down and the people rush happily to buy them while the prices of medicines remain the same? Should not the prices of medicines drop because the need for medicines exceeds the need for sugar, flour, oil, and other food stuffs? Why have the prices of medicines remained high when the prices of other commodities have been declining?

We made a tour of some pharmacies and posed these questions to their owners. Their answers seemed convincing on the surface but not so convincing in reality. The only reason for the high prices is greed and the desire to exploit others.

Their answers were: We bought the medicines at high prices. How can we sell them at a loss? Ask the Health Ministry, they said. It sets the prices of the medicines we receive from it periodically.

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When we told them that the prices have generally declined and maintaining their previous prices means they are doubling their profits, they did not respond.

What is strange is that those who control the prices of medicines know that they cannot compare them with foodstuffs like sugar and oil because if a person can do without sugar, in one way or another, that person cannot do without medicine. Otherwise, he could face death or at least suffer medical complications that would be expensive.

At a time when a great improvement has taken place in the market, following the president leader's message on 2 December 1995, is it reasonable for pharmacies to sell Profin [as transliterated], for example, for 500 dinars [D], Flueout for D350, cough syrup for D600, one Tetracycline injection for D1,000, a fertility injection for D1,000, 10 aspirin for D100, one Ponistan [as transliterated] capsule for D50, and other examples of medicines whose prices doubled several times following the improvement in the Iraqi dinar's purchasing power and the decline in the prices of many goods and materials?

It seems that the Health Ministry and the pharmacies share the responsibility for maintaining the existing prices of medicines. We did not pose the questions to the Health Ministry because we wanted to wait and see the prices of new medical supplies, which, by all standards, should be lower and controlled to prevent exploitation.

Selfish individuals should stop putting their narrow personal interests over the interests of the people and take advantage of their health.

Iraq: Lower Prices Reported by Cooperatives in Babil

96LH0144E Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 3 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Samir 'Abd Mahdi: "Babil Cooperatives Offer Their Products at Reduced Prices"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—Consumer cooperatives and productive family cooperatives in Babil Governorate have begun to offer their output of varied goods and commodities at cooperative prices reduced by 75 percent. A number of showrooms have been opened so branches of the cooperatives in the governorate capital, districts, and sub-districts can sell their products to the citizens directly. Goods offered include large quantities of men's, women's, and children's clothing and household goods.

Iraq: Transportation Prices Between Cities Reported

96LH0144F Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 4 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Bushra al-Hamdani: "Significant Reduction in Public and Private Transportation Prices"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—The Public Passenger Transportation Establishment has reduced its previous bus fares between Baghdad and the governorates by 25-50 percent. Yahya Khadr al-'Ani, the establishment general director, has announced this to AL-JUMHURIYAH, saying that the establishment has reduced its fares to make them compatible with the Iraqi dinar's growing purchasing power. Thus, the Baghdad-al-Basrah fare has become 400 dinars [D]; Baghdad-Maysan fare D350; Baghdad-Nineveh [Ninawa] D350; Baghdad-Dhi Qar D350; Baghdad-al-Ta'mim D200; Baghdad-al-Muthanna D200; Baghdad-Wasit D150; Baghdad-al-Najaf D100; Baghdad-al-Qadisiyah D150; Baghdad-Salah-al-Din D100; Baghdad and each of al-Anbar, Babil, and Karbala' D75; and Baghdad-Diyala D50.

In a related development, the Private Transportation Authority has reduced previous transportation fares within the city of Baghdad and between Baghdad and the governorates by 40 percent. Qays al-Khazraji, the authority general director, has said that transportation fares between all parts of Baghdad have been set at D15, excluding al-Bab al-Sharqi-Jisr Diyala and Karaj al-'Alawi-Abi Gharib, which have been reduced from D50 to D25. He added that the authority has reduced the Baghdad-al-Basrah fare from D1,200 to D800; Baghdad-Mosul from D800 to D500; Baghdad-al-Hillah from D150 to D100; Baghdad-Kirkuk from D500 to D300; Baghdad-Diyala from D150 to D150 [as published]; Baghdad to each of al-Diwaniyah and al-Kut from D300 to D200; and Baghdad to each of al-Nasiriyah and al-'Amarah from D700 to D500. Al-Khazraji pointed out that the authority's executive council continues to hold regular weekly meetings to reduce transportation fares and to make them compatible with the market developments. He asserted that all punitive measures will be taken against drivers who contravene the fares, including a three-day impoundment of the vehicle as a first step.

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Iraq: Prices of Leather Products Said Dropping

96LH0162A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Murayam al-'Attiyah: "Leather Product Prices Decreased"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Public Organization for Leather Industries, a Ministry of Industry and Minerals organization, has reduced prices of its products, including a high percentage of shoes for infants, children, girls, ladies, and men. That was announced by an authorized source in the organization. He said that infants' leather shoes have been reduced to 150 Iraqi dinars [D], infant leather sandals to D300, and women's to D250. Children's and girls' leather shoes were reduced to D150, girls' sandals to D300 and woven sandals to D270. The source stated that women's leather shoes have been reduced to D900, women's woven shoes to D100, and women's summer shoes to D625. The price of young men's shoes was set at D700, men's slippers at D400, women's regular slippers at D300, and women's high quality slippers at D1,000. The source made clear that the maximum price for men's shoes was D2,500 and the minimum was D900. The price of a woman's purse (natural leather) is D2,000, while a woman's purse made from manufactured leather is D900. The maximum cost for infant shoes is D450 with the minimum set at D250. The spokesman stated that direct sales to citizens would continue in the organization's showroom from 0800 to the end of official office hours.

Iraq: Central Bank Governor on Foreign Exchange

96LH0144A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 3 Feb 94 p 4

[Unattributed article: "Central Bank Governor to AL-JUMHURIYAH: "Banks Deal in Dinar and Its Fractions; Large Volume of Small Denominations Supplied"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi Central Bank Governor Dr. 'Isam Rashid Huwaysh has announced that banks have been instructed to deal in small denominations of the national currency. In an exclusive statement to AL-JUMHURIYAH, Dr. Huwaysh said that the Central Bank has large quantities of small denomination banknotes, including the dinar and its fractions, plus large quantities of coins. The bank has also readied large quantities of the 25 dinar banknote to be paid as part the salary of civil service employees in particular. The five dinar denomination will be supplied afterward. The Central Bank governor said he expects the circulation of small denominations will flourish in the current phase and the next one. As to the increased demand citizens make on banks to replace the foreign exchange in their possession (especially U.S. dollars). Dr. 'Isam Huwaysh said that branches of al-Rafidayn and al-Rashid Banks in Baghdad and the governorates are always ready to replace foreign exchange by Iraqi dinars and that citizens can replace the foreign exchange in their possession for national currency. He also said that the offices and branches of these two banks at first class hotels in Baghdad and at the offices of 38 money changing companies in al-Mansur Central Market building are also prepared to replace foreign exchange for Iraqi dinars according to the exchange rates posted by the Central Bank. In his statement, the governor noted that this week will witness the inauguration of new branches of al-Rafidayn and al-Rashid Banks in Baghdad to absorb the heavy traffic experienced by the existing branches.

Iraq: Corruption in Tax System Viewed

96LH0163A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Hayat 'Abd 'Ali on interview with Dr. Falih al-Shaykhali, a renowned economist and banker, by AL-JUMHURIYAH; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The rich will use any means to avoid paying taxes, although our tax system is much more diluted than systems in other countries of the world.

Nobody will disagree that the "army" of tax collectors has made financial gains, placing a burden on the state treasury and society. Taxes have gone into their pockets instead of going to the treasury.

In view of the above, the state treasury receives very little money from taxes. Taxes are unable to play their role in serving society and ensuring a fair distribution of income.

AL-JUMHURIYAH went to the Finance Ministry and the General Taxation Department to find out where the defect in the payment of taxes lies and to try to find a solution to the problem of some tax collectors and assessors. The following reflects the views of the Finance Ministry and a prominent economist on the tax issue, as we lay the basis of a new economic policy, based on the contents of the president leader's message to the Council of Ministers on 2 December 1995.

What did our Finance Ministry sources say? Finance Ministry sources say that one problem facing the tax system is tax evasion. This problem grows or contracts according to the people's tax awareness and the availability of a central data system. The more the people are aware of their tax responsibilities and the more they realize that paying taxes, according to

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their income, is no less important than national service, because of the taxes' financial, economic, and social importance, the more the scope of tax evasion decreases, and vice versa.

Saying that no tax evasion exists is untrue, but the Finance Ministry and the General Taxation Department have tried to pursue various scientific and practical means to limit this phenomenon and narrow the scope of tax evasion. The most important measure was amending Income Tax Law No. 113 of 1982, particularly regarding the tax scale (percentages and groups), to make it consistent with existing economic conditions. The General Taxation Department formed several survey committees at its headquarters and branches to review a taxpayer's economic activities and assess his income. The purpose was also to discover unregistered tax evaders and assess the taxes they owed to the state.

The General Taxation Department's tax assessors are the most important employees. Their job is to implement the taxation law. They are like the judge in a court whose task is to implement the law. Saying that all the assessors are fair and honest is untrue. Some of them become weak in the face of temptation and do not fulfill their duties honestly and faithfully. However, the Finance Ministry, the General Taxation Department, and the government led by the president leader (may God protect him) have tried to immunize them against such risks. Through the internal control department, the General Taxation Department monitors their activity to ensure that they do not go astray and accurately assess and collect taxes from all the people with taxable income. This is designed to increase revenues from this source, in line with the contents of the president leader's message on 2 December 1995.

What do the experts say? Dr. Falih al-Shaykhali, a renowned economist and banker, has called for the establishment of a new mechanism for a new taxation system to dispense with the army of tax assessors and collectors. He suggests replacing them with computers. He says: We must establish a new taxation system and a new standardized tax form, which we can distribute to all people with taxable income. They would fill out this form and we would enter the information into the computer. We can establish special offices to fill out these forms for the people. We can set a deadline for filing these tax forms—for example, the end of the year. The state should impose financial penalties on persons who fail to file their forms by this deadline. Tax payers can submit these forms directly to tax offices or send them by mail. I think that the tax form will allow us to dispense with the army of tax assessors and collectors.

[AL-JUMHURIYAH] We do have forms for this purpose. Are you suggesting a different one?

[Al-Shaykhali] I suggest a standard comprehensive form. It should be prepared by a committee composed of representatives from the Finance and Trade Ministries, the General Taxation Department, the Financial Control Department, the Association of Iraqi Industries, the chambers of commerce, the Association of Farmers Unions, and private sector institutions. This committee can draft this form and the instructions to fill it out. We can then discuss it at an expanded meeting to which all interested persons and experts would be invited. The association of Iraqi accountants and auditors can also review the form before it is finally approved.

[AL-JUMHURIYAH] The people paid low taxes, particularly when the industrial, agricultural, trade, services, and other sectors were in the hands of the government. Now that the private sector has entered these fields, private or share holding companies have been established, and the state has sold some of its enterprises to the private or joint sector, don't you think that the government must establish a new taxation system?

[Al-Shaykhali] The taxation system affects and is affected by the state's economy. Consequently, we must periodically review this system to make it consistent with the structure of our economy and the changes that take place in it. However, we must not do this frequently, because an investor must have a clear scope to plan his future activity. We reviewed our tax laws in 1994, considering the changes that have taken place in the Iraqi economy's structure and activities and the establishment of private or joint share holding companies.

We have amended Income Tax Law No. 113 of 1982 through Law No. 17 of 1994 and canceled Inheritance Law No. 64 of 1985. We recently reviewed the existing tax laws in the light of the message of the president leader (may God protect him) and prepared several proposals.

[Al-Shaykhali] We must have a new taxation system not only to achieve additional revenues for the state — which is very important — but also to stabilize the prices of goods and services.

[AL-JUMHURIYAH] What is the relationship between this and that?

[Al-Shaykhali] Let me give you an example. Imposing taxes on luxury goods, which only people with a high income can normally buy, could limit their supply and stabilize their prices. This will allow a redistribution of income. In other words, the state's income from these taxes will be partly transferred to low-income people,

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used to finance goods and services to them, or increase a person's food ration.

[AL-JUMHURIYAH] What do you think about gradual tax system?

[Al-Shaykhali] The tax system must be based on a scale that matches taxes to income. What we mean by income is the net profit made by some groups in society, including commodity speculators who must fill out the tax form I mentioned earlier. They also include the merchants, restaurant owners, other service providers, industrialists, farmers, and owners of agricultural companies. The state offers tax exemptions according to certain clear guidelines.

[AL-JUMHURIYAH] What is the purpose of your suggestion?

[Al-Shaykhali] 1. Saving money spent on a large number of tax collectors and preventing deviation and corruption;

2. saving efforts and resources devoted to these collectors;

3. ensuring the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information received about the citizens' incomes;

4. obtaining accurate revenues from this expanded tax collection system;

5. entering the tax form data into the computer to establish a data bank by which we can compare subsequent forms filed by tax payers;

6. giving every tax payer in all service and production sectors an identity number, which will remain with him all his life. He will file his taxes based on this number. Anyone who fails to do that by the established deadline should face legal measures. All this will make our work easier and more organized.

Iraq: Zakat Fund Status Reported

96LH0144B Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 3 Feb 96 p 4

[Article by Sa'di al-Sab': "Zakat Fund Revenues of 572 Million Dinars"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—Last year, revenues of the Zakat Fund, which is controlled by the Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs, amounted to 572,014,410 dinars [D]. Ahmad Khudayr al-Nasiri, the fund director, has said that financial assistance amounting to D408,853,952 was advanced during the year to D154,620 needy families in Baghdad and the governorates. Al-Nasiri noted that al-Anbar Governorate ranked first in the collection of zakat money, collecting D145,763,000; al-Ta'mim Governorate ranked second, collecting D98,574,706; and Dhi Qar Governorate ranked third, collecting D92,990,923.

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Israel: Peres Seeks National Referendum on Permanent Accord With PA

TA0104134596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1205 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Report by correspondent Gil Litman in Oman — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Litman] The Israel Air Force [IAF] plane carrying Prime Minister Shim'on Peres landed in Salalah, the second largest city in Oman, on the shores of the Arabian Sea exactly one hour ago. The scenery is just like the pictures in the Arabian Nights. The luxury and splendor here is impossible to believe until you see it with your own eyes. Hearing the Israeli national anthem played by the sultan's band sends a shiver down our spine despite the high temperatures and humidity here.

Shim'on Peres, at any rate, is not wasting any time. Shortly after breakfasting on the plane, he sat down and granted extensive interviews to the correspondents on board, answering almost all their questions at length. He provided us with several headlines, the most significant of which pertained to political issues. When I asked him whether the Labor Party would include a clause in its platform supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state, the prime minister surprised us by saying that he would propose that a national referendum be held before approving the final settlement with the Palestinians. In other words, as with Syria, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will ask the Labor Party to bring the issue to the public in a national referendum before signing the permanent settlement.

The media correspondents here are now speculating whether this is just a trick or an example of true political creativity. Peres first commented on yesterday's IAF helicopter crash in the Judaean Desert. He explained that the authorities still do not know what caused the helicopter to crash.

[Begin recording] [passage omitted]

[Litman] Mr. Peres, the Labor Party will soon start formulating its political platform. Will it include a clause agreeing to the establishment of a Palestinian state?

[Peres] In my opinion, these elections call for something very simple. We must ask the party for a mandate to negotiate with Syria and then bring the results to the people in a national referendum. We must ask the party for a mandate to conduct negotiations over a permanent arrangement with the Palestinians and announce that any agreement will also be presented for a national referendum.

[Litman] In any case, I understand that a Palestinian state is one of the options?

[Peres] My preferred option was and remains that of a Jordanian-Palestinian solution. I have not changed my opinion. If we attain a permanent arrangement with the Palestinians, I will propose holding a national referendum just like the agreement with Syria.

[Litman] As for the tension in the north, the prime minister does not think Israel's deterrent posture has been impaired by showing restraint along the Lebanese border. Shim'on Peres recommended, half jokingly, that people not watch the threats made by Hizballah's leaders on television. Peres told us that calm had been restored in the north following an appeal by the Americans and a discussion with French President Jacques Chirac. Incidentally, Chirac is due to arrive on a visit to Syria and Lebanon tomorrow, and Peres expressed the assessment that both these countries are interested in calming the situation.

[Peres] At this stage, both the Syrians and the others are keeping their word.

[Litman] Does Syria control Hizballah?

[Peres] Look, I think it is both the Syrians and the Lebanese. I discussed these issues with Chirac at length. I think that the Syrians also realize that they should not push things too far. This led to my assessment that we can do without opening up the air raid shelters. [passage omitted] [end recording]

[Litman] Incidentally, the prime minister refused to say whether he expected Qatar and Israel to establish diplomatic relations in the course of this visit. Peres said that he would only give his impressions of the visit after the tour was over. We are currently sitting in a waiting room furnished with couches, delicate vases, and crystal chandeliers in the sultan's palace. As we speak, Shim'on Peres is meeting with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id in the adjoining wing. Both men will hold a news conference in approximately one hour, and we will keep you updated.

Israel: Peres Says Referendum Issue Not Discussed With 'Arafat

TA0204053396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says he has not discussed with 'Arafat the proposal for holding a referendum before the approval of the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians. He said that he wants to submit the issue to the Labor Party conference. Our correspondent Gil Litman, who is

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accompanying Peres on his tour, reports that in a briefing to correspondents after his meeting with the Omani sultan, Peres said he has learned from experience that what is written down is never implemented in reality. The right thing to do is to ask for the public's permission to conduct negotiations, and then to submit the results of these negotiations to the public for a decision.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0405 GMT on 2 April includes a related report by Gil Litman from Oman, in which Prime Minister Peres is recorded as saying: "My positions are very clear; in every negotiation there is room for creativity, but if you expose this creativity to the negotiations it vanishes. Let me say, however, that the parameters for an agreement are clear: There will be no binational state, no transfer, and no control over another nation. On the other hand, Jerusalem will remain Israel's capital, Jordan Israel's security border, and all the settlements will be left intact."]

Israel: Likud, Meretz Minister Reject Peres Call For Referendum

TA0104144096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Likud has described Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' proposal to hold a national referendum on the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians as yet another attempt to deceive the public. The real national referendum would be the Knesset elections, Likud officials said. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that the Likud declared that Peres is trying to hoodwink the public because he fears voters lack confidence in his policies.

From a different angle, Environment Minister Yosi Sarid also criticized the prime minister's remarks on a national referendum. Sarid said that now, in the wake of this declaration and after it has already been announced that any agreement with Syria would be brought before the public in a national referendum, it was unclear why elections should be held at all.

Israel: Jordanian Envoy Demands Lifting 'Siege' on Palestinians

JN0104195696 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian Ambassador to Israel 'Umar al- Rifa'i met this morning with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq and discussed issues of bilateral concern, latest developments in the region, and the siege which continues on the Palestinian people.

Al-Rifa'i emphasized Jordan's position in support of the Palestinian brothers, and the need to lift the siege on the Palestinian territories. He spoke about the seriousness of continuing this situation, which is not in the interest of any party.

Baraq expressed the Israeli Government's commitment to proceed with the peace process, and promised to tackle the current situation.

Israel: Shamgar Commission Reports Findings

TA2903074096 (Internet) Israel Information Service in English 28 Mar 96

["Summary of the report of the State Commission of Inquiry into the murder of the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] 1. On 28.3.96 the Commission of Inquiry into the murder of the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin submitted its final report to the Government. The Commission was appointed by the Government of Israel to investigate the events and determine "findings and conclusions regarding the intelligence and security preparations and everything related to VIP protection in general, and at the rally where the murder took place in particular."

2. The Commission held 61 meetings, heard 72 witnesses whose testimony was documented in 6,385 pages of protocol and studied thousands of exhibits. During the course of its work, the Commission examined the system-wide handling (security and intelligence) of the threat of a Jewish assailant, the preparations of the General Security Service (GSS) and the police for the "Yes To Peace, No To Violence" rally on 4.11.95, the functioning of these bodies on 4.11.95 and the details of the murder itself, including steps taken immediately after the shooting and including the evacuation and the medical treatment.

3. In reference to the system-wide framework, the Commission determined the following main conclusions:

* The GSS had abundant information about the intensification of threats against the lives of prominent persons, first and foremost, the prime minister. The GSS did not do enough, in terms of adjusting its protection method to the new risks, to cope with the worsening threat, and did not ensure that its VIP bodyguards properly understood the severity of this threat.

* The existing protection method was unreasonable and exposed the prime minister to serious risks. Moreover, while the intelligence assessment of the situation regarding an attack against the prime minister became increasingly more serious, neither the head of the GSS nor the

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division or unit heads held any serious discussion to reevaluate the method or adapt the protection method to the increasing risk; and in any case, no real changes were made in the protection method.

* In the arguments made by those who received warnings and their representatives, an attempt was made to claim that the nature of government in Israel and the deep ties between leaders and the public at large prevented them from providing maximum protection to their charges. The Commission rejected this claim and determined: "The obstacle to implementing the improved method was not the result of the statesman's need to have effective contact with the public, but of conceptual routine."

* The cooperation between the VIP Protection Unit and the Israel Police regarding planning security at the "Yes To Peace, No To Violence" rally and implementing it was lacking. As a result, security arrangements necessitated by the situation during the rally were not carried out.

* There was insufficient flow of information between the GSS and the Israel Police regarding the threat of a Jewish assailant. This was a result of both the GSS's recoiling from distributing highly sensitive and classified information and the concern that unwise use of it may cause real damage and the Israel Police recoiling from handling intelligence material dealing with subversion and Jewish terrorism, and its belief that this subject is not among the matters it handles as far as VIP protection is concerned.

4. The Commission found that the planning of security for the rally at the end of which Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was murdered suffered from two basic planning defects:

One is that the method was not adapted to meet the risks. The second is that even in light of the limitations of the protection method used on the night of the murder, the planning of the security of the rally was severely lacking; unfortunately, not enough appropriate attention was devoted to securing the parking lot where the late prime minister was murdered. This matter was not sufficiently clarified to the police, who were responsible for security at the rally.

Spoken agreements formulated with the police were not written down, and after the fact different and conflicting versions were heard regarding the level of protection required in the parking lot by the GSS. There was improper assigning of the police forces designated to assist the VIP Protection Unit.

Furthermore, the Commission found that the police planning regarding the security of the area where the VIP's were was faulty and did not suitably take into account the parking lot area. The commission also found other planning faults which had no direct bearing on the murder taking place.

5. The commission further determined that even after the gaps in the planning were discovered during the rally, the police and GSS did not take the necessary steps to prevent the danger threatening the VIP's passing through the parking lot. The parking lot was inadequately cleared and the peripheral protection provided to the prime minister as he came down the steps did not suit the circumstances and did not respond to the threat.

6. On 17.12.95 warnings were sent to seven officials in the GSS and Israel Police. The text of the warnings appears as Appendix A to the Commission's Report (p. 209 of the report). The Commission reviewed the arguments of those who received warnings from it and who raised their arguments both orally and in writing. After considering the arguments, the Commission reached the following conclusions:

(A) Karmi Gilon - Head of the GSS

1. The Commission reached the final conclusion that what was said in the warning sent to Mr. Gilon on 17.12.95 was proven, with the exception of one item referring to the failure to ensure distribution of intelligence and its being properly understood by the Israel Police. Regarding this matter, Karmi Gilon was not found to be responsible.

2. The Commission found that starting in 1993, there were increasing reports of plans to assassinate the prime minister. Karmi Gilon and his subordinates knew that the assailant might be unknown and that there was a possibility that intelligence would be unable to warn about him. Karmi Gilon reiterated that there was a possibility that sufficient intelligence warning would not be issued and that the solution to this was in VIP protection. However, he did not draw the operational conclusions necessitated by this.

3. The commission found that despite these facts, which obligated constant reevaluation of the protection method and implementation of necessary changes corresponding to the danger, Karmi Gilon did not conduct even one substantive, relevant, thorough and comprehensive discussion with all the security and intelligence- gathering bodies to review the methods, despite the worsening assessments.

4. The Commission found that the GSS head also did not personally inspect the method in the field in order to systematically assess how protection was planned and implemented.

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5. In his testimony, Karmi Gilon presented an organizational thesis whereby it is enough for him to outline goals and their order of priority, and to delegate authority; and from the moment he did that, responsibility and authority are transferred to his subordinates. Therefore, he thought it was sufficient to warn against the danger of a Jewish assailant and authorize the division heads subordinate to him to act accordingly. The Commission determined that the organization, alertness and readiness of a GSS unit dealing with the sensitive matter of protecting the prime minister is a matter in which the GSS head cannot divest himself of the responsibility for active supervision and monitoring.

6. Furthermore, the Commission established that the danger, which materialized in the attack, was not adequately acknowledged. Only some of the bodyguards saw the threat of an assassination as a real possibility. Others' thoughts regarding the extreme right focused more on the danger of stones or tomatoes being thrown.

Karmi Gilon should have seen to planning operational and conceptual readiness that would create an appropriate level of preparedness in the bodyguard.

Mr. Gilon resigned from his position during the course of the Commission's work. The Commission found that this action reflected its opinion and saw no need to make further recommendations regarding him.

(B) D.Y. - Head of the GSS Security Division

1. The Commission reached the final conclusion that the details of the warning sent to D.Y. were proven.

2. The Commission determined that in 1995, the year D.Y. began his position, there were increasing assessments regarding the personal risk to the prime minister from a Jewish assailant.

3. According to the definition of the division's tasks, the head of the Security Division is also responsible for VIP protection. Among other things, he is also responsible for determining security doctrine, methods of operation and checking the effectiveness of the protection system.

4. The Commission determined that the VIP Protection Unit's method of operation was a substantive issue requiring comprehensive, in-depth discussion, and in the absence of an initiative by the GSS head to convene a discussion on the matter, the head of the Security Division was obligated, given his job definition, to request a broad and thorough operational analysis during which, among other things, the link between the nature of the risks and the kind of measures taken to counter them would be presented. The lack of such an initiative was a substantive flaw in the division head's functioning.

5. The Commission established that the division head was responsible for conducting close supervision of the security plan for the rally. Many people and many protected VIP's attended the rally; it took place at a time of real risks of attack from extremist Arab terrorist organizations and of sharpened threats of an attack against the prime minister by a Jewish assailant. For such a sensitive event, it was necessary for the division head to thoroughly study the data and review the essential and key points of the planning, despite the unit head's approval of the plan.

6. The Commission determined that the threat of a Jewish assailant was not sufficiently emphasized to the bodyguards. No efforts were made to process the material and use it as a guideline for formulating behavior, planning and implementation. This subject also requires comprehensive discussion — how to instill in the bodyguards the severity of the danger, even in the absence of concrete information. This was not done.

Mr. D. Y. resigned from his position before the Commission of Inquiry was appointed. The Commission determined that this resignation reflected its opinion and saw no need for any further recommendation.

(C) B.L. - Head of the VIP Protection Unit

The Commission reached the final conclusion that the details of the warning sent to B.L. were proven.

1. B.L. commanded the unit during a peak period and did indeed attempt to improve the service conditions and increase the number of positions available in the unit, but he did not seek to or initiate a reevaluation of the threats versus the means, i.e. the operational protection side, and of the appropriate method of protection.

2. The Commission determined that a correct management method is one of reciprocal feedback between the senior commander who watches from above and initiates operation, and the subordinate echelon that initiated raising problems. Therefore, B.L. was obliged to initiate a discussion with the designated command echelons and other officials to evaluate the method of protection.

3. The Commission determined that the actions taken to heighten alertness among the bodyguards regarding the threat of a Jewish assailant were inadequate.

4. The Commission determined, regarding the rally, that the planning should have been given directly to an experienced branch head and the unit head himself could have designed the protection plan.

In any case, B.L. should have reviewed the details of the plan and thoroughly checked what had been decided regarding the parking lot, the Gan Ha'ir [shopping mall

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adjacent to assassination site] road and its approaches. He also should have verified that the police were properly deployed and that no critical weak points existed.

5. The Commission determined that the planning for the northern parking lot was lacking and that the request made to the police was unclear and left a wide opening for misunderstanding on the part of the police.

6. The Commission determined that during the rally, B.L. did [not] monitor the operation of the police Special Patrol Unit, there was no review of the sterility of the parking lot area and of the clearing of the Gan Ha'ir roof and there was no review of the deployment of the advance squad or of the possibility of going down to the parking lot.

The Commission recommended that B.L. not continue in his position in the GSS.

(D) A.A. - Head of the VIP Protection Unit's Operations Branch

1. The Commission reached the final conclusion that the details of the warning sent to A.A. were proven, with the exception of one item referring to the failure to distribute and inculcate in the bodyguards the information about a Jewish assailant. It was determined that A.A. was not responsible in this matter.

2. The Commission determined that A.A. as head of the operations branch and a long-time veteran of the unit who had even served as head of the training branch, should have raised the concern that the charged atmosphere necessitated a change in deployment, i.e. a different method.

The Commission accepts that the obligation to reevaluate the method in 1995 lay primarily with senior GSS officials. However, in the absence of such an initiative, the issue should have at least arisen in the framework of the unit directly responsible for the matter.

3. The Commission determined that the planning of protection at the rally, which was assigned to A.A. as the escort of the field commander Y.S., was lacking and in this matter, A.A. was more senior that Y.S. A.A. was assigned to assist him and being far more veteran and experienced than Y.S. he was at least as responsible as him for all of the planning and operational shortcomings. These include defining the requirements from the police, the lack of clarity regarding pedestrians, the failure to check the area in nighttime lighting conditions, the failure to review the police response to the summary made during the preliminary meeting that was sent to headquarters, the failure to compare the police order with the unit's requirements, failure to mention the parking lot in the orders, ignoring the reality in the parking lot as he saw it when he arrived at the rally, and more.

In light of these findings, the Commission recommended that A.A. not serve in a command capacity in the GSS and that lifting this restriction not be considered for four years.

(E) Y.S. - Head of the VIP Protection Unit's protection force at the rally.

1. The Commission accepted Y.S.'s arguments that according to the method in force during the rally, there was no obligation to ensure that the parking lot be essentially cleared and kept that way.

Moreover, the Commission determined that the protection method used was lacking, and even unreasonable, that Y.S. was young and inexperienced, and that the head of the operations branch should have accompanied him.

2. At the same time, the Commission determined that with regard to the planning Y.S. failed to make an adequate tour of the area while coordinating with the police, that he left a lack of clarity in the contents of the agreements with the police, that he failed to review the police planning, that he left unresolved disputes between the unit and police which were not raised with senior command officials for them to decide before the rally.

3. The Commission determined that the importance and sensitive nature of the northern parking lot should have struck Y.S. even if the protection method did not call for filtering the entire seam area, since the method used also did not call for a unified security approach at each location.

4. The Commission determined that the roof of Gan Ha'ir was not given sufficient attention and the lighting in the parking lot was not checked in advance under real conditions.

5. Regarding the operation, the Commission determined that when crowds gathered at the foot of the staircase, Y.S. did not act quickly and decisively to clear the seam area, did not demand that those present in the area be checked and to a large extent was dragged along by the actions of others. Furthermore, he did not deploy the forces in the area in a way that would secure the prime minister's safe departure, and he did not consider an alternative route for the prime minister's departure.

Based on these conclusions, the Commission recommended that Mr. Y.S. not hold a command position in the GSS and that the matter not be reexamined for two years.

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(F) Commander Ya'aqov Shoval — Commander of the Yarqon Subdistrict of the Israel Police Tel Aviv District

1. The Commission reached the final conclusion that the details of the warning sent to Commander Shoval were proven.

2. The Commission determined that Commander Shoval bore the heavy responsibility of organizing the deployment of police forces at the rally where some 100,000 participants and several hundred VIP's were expected to attend. The Commission assumed that the deployment at the rally and on the dais were flawless.

3. Nonetheless, the Commission determined that the deployment of the police forces omitted the northern section of Tel Aviv City Hall, which includes the parking lot. Even if generally, at public events where there are no guarded VIP's, this area is a neglected one in terms of security arrangements, that was not the case this time. As the person responsible for planning the police deployment, Commander Shoval should have considered the organization of this area, appointed a police commander for it and allocated a policing force for it.

4. The Commission determined that Commander Shoval should have done so independently, despite the failure on the part of the VIP Protection Unit to present clear requests to the police and the flaws that the unit showed in planning and implementation.

5. The Commission determined that the crowds that gathered around 21:00 hours should have set off a warning light and obligated Commander Shoval to take action that goes beyond issuing an order and entails thoroughly checking what is going on in the area and the identity of those present in the parking lot at the time.

6. The Commission determined that the forces sent to the parking area at a later point in its sterilization were not grouped together or concentrated, and did not receive instructions together from the field commander or a briefing on the kind of dangers present and the way to handle them.

The Commission recommended that Commander Shoval be censured by the Police Inspector General and the conclusions of the Commission be inserted into his personal file.

(G) H.K. - Head of the Information Gathering Division.

The warning sent to H.K. by the Commission on 17.12.95 stated: "The GSS division head responsible for gathering information on the subject the inquiry is discussing, H.K., may be adversely affected if the Commission reached the final conclusion that he did not verify that the information he amassed about planned attacks by Jewish elements was distributed in the right way, and in the right numbers, to the relevant echelons in the Israel Police. Refraining to do so is a failure on the part of the above mentioned official to carry out his duties."

In his arguments before the Commission, H.K. maintained (in person and via his representatives) that the nature of the intelligence material he handles requires extreme caution and limiting distribution, and that he provided the police with abundant detailed information about the threat of an attack against public figures. H.K. further argued that it was incumbent on the police commanders who received the information to distribute it among their subordinates. In order to strengthen his position, he quoted from the remarks of the Minister of Public Security, the Police Inspector General and the head of the Intelligence Department of the Israel Police who testified before the Commission, expressed satisfaction with the intelligence cooperation with the GSS and noted that the threat of a Jewish assailant was known to the police.

The Commission felt that there were indeed some systemic flaws in the relay of information from the GSS to the police, both with the GSS and with the Police. The former recoiled at distributing information and the latter recoiled from receiving and distributing it among the Israel Police. However these flaws are systemic and not personal, and therefore the Commission found no cause to draw personal conclusions against H.K.

7. Systemic Conclusions

A. The Commission rejected the management concept presented to it by the GSS head and on his behalf, whereby the head of the service is responsible for defining the direction and the order of priorities which the service will follow and the division heads are autonomous, each in their respective fields, to operate within the framework of this direction and order of priorities. The Commission believes that effective management means carefully thought-out delegation of authority alongside command, supervision, and control. To quote the Commission: "Effective management strategy is bidirectional; it decentralizes authorities, but does not abandon the need for supervision and control, and command initiative from above."

B. The Commission feels that it is worth reevaluating the procedure for the cooperation between the Israel Police and the GSS on the subject of VIP protection, so that the command structure for operations can be unified, the level of cooperation can be increased and a

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common operation language can be created for the VIP Protection Unit and the police auxiliary units, mainly the Special Patrol Unit.

C. The Commission feels that despite the fact that the lessons of the Hebron Commission regarding expanding distribution of intelligence were partly absorbed and implemented, not enough has been done to expand the distribution of intelligence to the forces requiring it. Therefore, the Commission recommends a reevaluation of the methods of distribution [for] intelligence information from the GSS to the police and to the same extent, a reevaluation of the distribution internally among the police.

D. The Commission further recommended that the number of positions in the VIP Protection Unit be at least doubled, so that it can contend with the existing threats against public figures.

8. A. The Commission devoted a subchapter of its report to the claims of a so-called conspiracy. Various arguments were raised regarding this matter. These arguments were checked and witnesses were questioned about them, either by the Commission or by the information gatherers. However, no basis was found for these claims.

B. The Commission also referred to the case of Shlomi Halevi, a student who was aware of Yig'al 'Amir's intentions to commit murder and who reported a conversation he supposedly heard in a public restroom about plans to shoot the prime minister.

The Commission noted that, after the fact, it can be assessed that a more thorough investigation of Halevi, who portrayed himself as having only a genuine interest of relating the truth, might have led to the uncovering of the real information that Halevi had. However, that obviously does not derogate from the actions and shortcomings of Halevi, who did not divulge the information he had.

C. The Commission also addressed the running of agents, the need for close supervision of problematic agents and the need to prevent them from violating the law or engaging in provocations.

9. The Commission commented on the contradictions and conflicting versions of the testimony given by commanders of the VIP Protection Unit, as well as shortcomings of the police and GSS in the immediate transfer of all the relevant material for the Commission's work, from not submitting it at all to submitting it late.

10. The Commission Report open and available to the public is 214 pages. Attached to it is a classified appendix dealing with the methods of operation of the VIP Protection Unit and the Israel Police, the dissemination of intelligence from the GSS to the Israel Police, the prime minister's supervision of GSS operations and the case known as the Avishay Raviv case. The classified appendix is 118 pages (87 of which are documents and protocols related to the event).

11. At the conclusion of its remarks, the Commission said, among other things:

A. This Commission was not appointed to investigate the circumstances and causes that led to the creation of the social and political culture of which the murder was an expression. It was not asked to give its opinion regarding the circumstances that led to the murder. Nor is it a task that a commission of inquiry can or should take upon itself. The Commission was rightly limited to reviewing the performance of persons and institutional systems that were responsible for the security of the prime minister.

B. Our findings and conclusions which appear in this report reflect the conceptual and operation flaws in many areas, and a weakness in the management culture of government authorities. In this respect, this report serves as a signpost and a warning for many other institutions.

C. The Commission of Inquiry does not mitigate the need for in- depth soul-searching in Israeli society or search for answers to the questions: how did we get to the point where an Israeli prime minister is murdered by a radical assailant and how did violence thereby become a method for resolving political disputes. There is no doubt that such soul-searching needs to be done and primarily in social and cultural frameworks, including the education system.

D. Ancient Jewish history experienced political assassinations throughout the generations. In various periods of the history of our people, this method entered into the Kingdoms of Israel and Judaea. The reborn State of Israel must learn the lessons of Jewish history.

After the destruction of the First Temple, there was a political dispute among the remaining Jews still in the Land of Israel, led by Gedalya Ben-Ahiqam. This dispute was decided then through a political assassination (Jeremiah, Chapter 40).

The destruction of the Second Temple was also accompanied by bloodshed among brothers. Zealotry, hooliganism and violence within Jewish society led to destruction as described in the story "Because of Qamtza and Bar-Qamtza Jerusalem was destroyed" (Tractate Gittin, 55-57).

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Two thousand years later, we have returned to our land and it is vital that we know how to eradicate this bad culture that has arisen amongst us:

"Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shim'on Bar-Yohay: Bad culture in a man's home is worse than Armageddon" (Tractate Berakhot, 7:2).

Israel: NEQUDA Press Review for Feb

TA2503151196

[FBIS Report] The following is a review of the February issue of 'Ofra NEQUDA, the Hebrew-language magazine published by the Society for the Advancement of Settlement and Absorption in Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, and the Jordan Rift Valley, which serves as the political organ of the Jewish settlers in the territories. These reports include summaries of all articles, reports, interviews, commentaries, and other items bearing on political affairs published in NEQUDA.

CONTENTS: 1. Opening Page 2. News Section 3. Peres Has Won the (Palestinian Authority) Elections 4. Discussing the Permanent Arrangement 5. We Failed at a Crucial Moment 6. At Least Let Us Have the Keys 7. The Torch Bearers Are on Their Way

OPENING PAGE:

This 400-word column appearing on page 9 and signed by editor Uri Orbach is entitled "Pulling One Over." Orbach views the coming Knesset elections as an "either-or" situation: "Either we retain the Golan Heights or we abandon them; either a Palestinian state is established or it is not; either Jerusalem is divided/demilitarized/internationalized, or it is not." He believes that, these being the options, "Labor will swear, until the elections in three months, that our eternal-eternal-eternal capital of Jerusalem will remain undivided. We will hear no word about pulling down the Golan settlements until the elections. Even al- Asad will all at once become Labor's mystery man. Al-Asad? Never heard of him, they will say. We will hear a lot about security, a bit about 'Arafat, a lot about Husayn, and not a word about Hawatimah. Besides, Labor will not make cynical use of the assassination of the late-late-late Yitzhaq Rabin. No way." Orbach concludes that the national camp, "which has an alternative plan for Israel's security, border defense, territorial integrity, Jewish identity and education, aliya, and settlement," "should expose everything Labor is trying to obscure, hide, or bury."

FROM THE NEWS SECTION:

1. Prime Minister Peres is acting to raise funds for Memad in an attempt to hurt the NRP [National Religious Party] and The Third Way. (excerpt)

2. Public Security Minister Shahal promises Jordan Rift Valley residents to act for a permanent arrangement based on the Alon Plan.

3. The Settlements Committee launches an election campaign designed to bring about the election of Binyamin Netanyahu. (excerpt)

4. The Settlements Committee begins preparing a settlement plan to be launched after the elections.

5. Labor has registered citizens as party members without their knowledge. Labor staffers are suspected of selecting their names from the recent population census.

PERES HAS WON THE (PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY) ELECTIONS

The 2,500-word article on pages 26, 27, 28, and 29 by Moti 'Inbari derides the Palestinian elections and the Israeli expectations from them: "The Israeli Government seems to be the primary beneficiary of the Palestinian autonomy elections. Yet the victory is partial, temporary, and debatable. 'Arafat has not acquired a supportive and obedient parliament; the objectives of the foreign donors, who contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to ensure proper elections, were violated; and the forgeries committed in the election process generated violent tensions among the Palestinians."

After reviewing several instances in which the election results were "a slap in 'Arafat's face," 'Inbari surmises: "In view of the outcome of the elections, the chairman's next moves are predictable. Since 'Arafat is afraid of the elected council's ability to curb his freedom of action and to be an active opposition, it is safe to assume that he will try to discount the significance of the elections. He will presumably attempt to bury the elected council inside the Palestine National Council."

"Shim'on Peres is thus the main beneficiary of these elections. 'Arafat is now forced to amend the Palestinian Charter, and the closer this amendment is to the Israeli election date, the greater the 'government's achievement.' If the charter is not amended, Peres will take a tough line against 'Arafat — possibly discontinuing the permanent arrangement talks — thereby presenting himself as an assertive statesman and possibly improving his public image." 'Inbari concludes that, for Israel, the gains will be offset by the disadvantages. "'Arafat's dictatorship may reduce terrorist activity in the coming few months, possibly until the elections, but it will not truly solve the problem of regional violence."

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DISCUSSING THE PERMANENT ARRANGEMENT

Hagay Huberman's 3,000-word article on pages 36, 37, 38, and 39 reviews the "secret" unofficial Israeli-Palestinian permanent status talks, based on Yosi Alfer's plan "which was published by the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies two years ago," as well as the left- and right-wing Israeli officials' stands on the matter.

Huberman maintains that the talks, conducted by Minister Beilin and academics Ron Pundaq and Ya'ir Hirshfeld, started under Yitzhaq Rabin, who was in favor of the plan in general terms. "The person whose entire outlook goes against this proposal is present Prime Minister Shim'on Peres." Peres's rejection of the concept of separation is opposed by Ministers Yosi Beilin and Ehud Baraq, and "apparently also by Hayim Ramon." "This may sound incredible to the uninitiated, but Shim'on Peres is genuinely opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judaea and Samaria. Peres believes that the Palestinian entity will not turn into a state as long as he holds the reins to the political process. Contrary to Rabin, who believed in small, pinpointed moves, Peres scorns minutiae." Peres' aides say he believes the Palestinian state "will be able to survive only by striving against someone — and that someone would be the State of Israel. Such a situation will obliterate his great peace vision. The alternative, in his view, is a dependent ministate incorporated in an alliance with the neighboring states."

Huberman adds: "Ever since the permanent status talks were launched, the left-wing fathers of the move have been making serious efforts to forge a dialogue with the right wing, including settlement leaders in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, in an attempt to secure their support for the initiative."

The article reviews the disparate Likud stands on the Palestinian issue and outlines the approaches of the party leaders.

WE FAILED AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT

No'am Arnon's 1,400-word commentary on pages 44 and 45 maintains that the NRP's failure to actively struggle against the withdrawal from the territories is "a fatal, historic failure at a crucial moment." Arnon argues that placidly accepting facts, such as the Israel-PLO agreement, is "a tragic error," because "a determined struggle against and rejection of one phase will preclude the next." After dwelling on the moral, religious, and political aspects of the issue, he calls on the NRP to wait for "an auspicious moment to rectify the situation through cultural, public, and political action."

AT LEAST LET US HAVE THE KEYS

This 1,100-word article by Ray Rublin rejects the Peace Now argument that numerous settlers would be willing to be evacuated if compensated. Rublin does not believe the proposal is practical even if only 1,000 families abandon the settlements. He argues that since "most settlers have no intention of leaving, the settlers and the government will benefit equally if no compensation is offered to those who are willing to leave." Instead, "the government should meet its basic obligations toward its citizens: take care of their security and of everything necessary for the continued existence of the settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza."

THE TORCH BEARERS ARE ON THEIR WAY

Yehoshu'a Mor Yosef's 3,000-word report on pages 56, 57, 58, and 59 provides an outline of the Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza settlers competing on the various Knesset slates for the next elections: Ge'ula Kohen, Tzvi Handel, Nisan Slomiansky, Yuliy Kosharovskiy, Moshe Chiprot, Eli Kohen, and Ze'ev Geizel. The report also refers to additional possible candidates on the Tzomet and Moledet lists.

Israel: NEQUDA Press Review for Mar

TA3103090496

[FBIS Report] The following is a review of the March 1996 edition of 'Ofra NEQUDA, the Hebrew-language magazine published by the Society for the Advancement of Settlement and Absorption in Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, and the Jordan Rift Valley, which serves as the political organ of the Jewish settlers in the territories. These reports include summaries of all articles, reports, interviews, commentaries, and oher items with a bearing on political affairs published in NEQUDA.

CONTENTS: 1. Opening Page 2. News Section 3. No Reason for Joy 4. The Enemy — The Blocs Plan 5. De Luxe Palestinians or Arab Sudeten 6. Interview With Outgoing Judaea and Samaria Settlers Spokesman

OPENING PAGE

This 400-page column appearing on page 9 and signed by 'Ami'el Unger is entitled "Things Will Be Fine, But Not Right Away." Discussing Palestinian terrorism, Unger says that "those who extended credit to 'Arafat on the White House lawn so that he would fight terrorism" have "no choice but to continue extending more and more credit."

Unger says that contrary to that "ridiculous line," Hayim Ramon, "who has sharp political instincts," should be

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listened to. "Ramon does not promise us that 'Arafat will save us, but warns us against returning to Gaza and the Nabulus casbah, and in short, a resumption of the intifadah. This time they will use the 30,000 rifles they have collected, as the moderate Nabil Sha'th said. Ramon knows that the Israeli public feels it is being duped, but he expects voters to view any alternative to the current policy as even worse." "The situation is bad, but the alternative is worse," Unger says, adding that if the right wing wins the elections, "we can expect a very difficult period on the political-security front, as well as economically." "We cannot overcome terrorism by making more concessions to the PLO. We must state openly that this malignant disease will not disappear on its own and that putting off the treatment will only worsen it. In the situation to which we have been pushed by Oslo, a state that wants to survive must prepare itself for the struggle. This time it is not a war of choice. This war is forced on us, and what remains open is only the timing, the price, and the chances."

FROM THE NEWS SECTION:

1. Concern over defections by SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers, which have reached 30 percent in recent weeks, many to Hizballah. (text)

2. 'Arafat extends reductions in taxes to families of suicide bombers, according to AL-AYYAM.

3. Military intelligence warned Rabin about collapse of intelligence setup in the Palestinian Authority [PA].

4. Amana settlement expansion plan after Knesset elections. (text)

5. Israel rejects PA request to issue arms licenses.

6. Fatah leaflet rejects amending Palestinian Charter.

NO REASON FOR JOY

Hagay Huberman's 3,500-word article on pages 44-48 says that even if the right wing comes to power "the clock cannot be turned back" in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.

"For two years, quite a few people in Israel have been toying with the natural and very human idea of turning the state clock back. These people — including myself — love to dream about rubbing off the shades of brown and yellow from the Judaea and Samaria map, annulling the Palestinian autonomy, about the collapse of the PA, and sending 'Arafat and his flock back to Tunis. It is a natural and understandable dream, but just as in Rabbi 'Aqiva's day, it is not realistic."

Huberman writes that while "it is difficult for Eretz Yisra'el loyalists to accept, a process does exist which has created a reality that must be recognized. It must be recognized with pain, regret, tears, the gnashing of teeth, and genuine mourning over the loss of parts of Eretz Yisra'el — but it is an irreversible process for the foreseeable future."

"We must realize that even a right-wing government will not abrogate the Oslo accords and will not of its own volition bring back the lost parts of the homeland. Furthermore, it will not even halt the process. That is simply impossible. The Likud leaders, in any coalition, will form ties with the PA, yes, even 'Arafat — just like the left wing — and sit with them to discuss the continuation of the political process. Sweet dreams of 'stopping the process' and a 'political stalemate' are dangerous illusions. There is a PA, there is a Palestinian self-rule, there is a Palestinian police force in Judaea and Samaria towns. These are facts that can be changed only through war. The risk of a war initiated by Israel without a national consensus contains even more risks than a Palestinian state."

Huberman claims that if the Likud comes to power a consensus can be reached on the Oslo B map "with slight amendments." "An Oslo B- plus map as a permanent arrangement can be acceptable to both right- wing and left-wing supporters since its lines were "dictated precisely, yes precisely, by Jewish settlement." "In general, the yellow and brown areas constitute 26.6 percent of all the territories of Judaea and Samaria. Over 70 percent of the area remains in Israeli hands."

Huberman contends that such a map "can also be acceptable to the left wing because it contains the Israeli left's main demand over the past 28 years: To end the occupation." He adds that "if a national agreement is reached over the Oslo B map, a right-wing government will be able to withstand international demands and pressures to continue the withdrawal."

"If the left remains in power, Eretz Yisra'el loyalists will face a tough or even terrible dilemma: Whether to support Peres' functional compromise, which contains a major risk to settlement, but with the chance of regaining Jewish sovereignty in Judaea and Samaria in the distant future; or to support the Yosi Alpher map, which will resolve the problem of the existence and development of 70 percent of the settlers, who will remain Israeli citizens, but will abandon the remainder and most of the territory to total Palestinian sovereignty. The issue of which compromise is less terrible — a territorial compromise or a functional compromise — calls for a wide-ranging debate, which must be held now whether openly or secretly. It is clear that in both instances, however, there will be no withdrawal to the 1967 border, and in both cases there is a basis for

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Abu-al-Raghib said that "the United Arab Emirates and Jordan are considering renewing the economic and trade cooperation agreement between the two countries, which has expired." [passage omitted]

Jordan: Muslim Brotherhood Figure Defends Suicide Operations Fatwa

NC0104192696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with 'Abd-al-Majid Dhunaybat, general supervisor of the Muslim Brotherhood Information Bureau in Jordan, in Amman, by Jihad al-'Idan in Tehran; date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-'Idan] Mr. Dhunaybat, religious rulings have been issued about the permissibility of martyrdom operations against the Zionist entity. How do the Muslim Brothers, who represent the backbone of the Islamist stream in the Arab world, view these fatwas?

[Dhunaybat] May God reward you well. In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. May God's peace be with the prophet, his kin, and companions. Martyrdom operations and other jihad operations in Palestine are a legitimate form of negotiation with the usurping occupier, who lies like a burden on the people's hearts and desecrates Palestinian land and sanctities. If there had been no occupation and aggression, there would have been no resistance. We have perfect trust in the fatwa issued by a group of trustworthy Jordanian ulema and by others in the rest of the Arab and Islamic world. This is Islam's view. While backing this ruling, we urge Muslim ulema everywhere to adopt a clear position on this issue condemning the terrorism carried out by the Zionist enemy and to explain to their followers that such jihad operations are justified, permissible and, indeed, represent the culmination of jihad for the sake of God.

[Al-'Idan] Mr. Dhunaybat, some people advocate distinguishing between Zionist military personnel and civilians as legitimate targets for attacks, keeping in mind all the time that the Zionist civilians are basically the backbone of the Zionist military and settler apparatus in the region. What is your opinion?

[Dhunaybat] My honorable brother, the fatwa issued here in Jordan included a good response to this view. In the enemy state every individual is armed and is considered a soldier fighting against the Palestinians. Those who carried out terrorism against our sons and sanctities in Hebron, in al-Aqsa, and elsewhere were civilian settlers. Therefore the Palestinians have a right to use the same methods and weapons against them. Israeli civilians are a bulwark for their soldiers. In Islamic jurisprudence, if a soldier hides behind civilians and they protect him, then Muslims have a duty to kill these civilians because they are considered opponents of Islamic jihad. Therefore the civilians who are now being killed are the same people who formerly killed our people in Hebron, Jerusalem, Dayr Qibya, and Dayr Yasin. Ever since the Zionist escapade began in 1948 they have been killing or expelling our women, children, and old people without distinguishing between soldiers and civilians among our people.

[Al-'Idan] Mr. Dhunyabat, the Zionist cordon around the West Bank and Gaza continues with dire consequences for the Palestinian people. Meanwhile the major powers hasten to hold conferences to protect the Zionist entity. What do you think of these contradictions?

[Dhunaybat] The siege of the Palestinian people by both the Zionist enemy and the Palestinian Authority—which has become a tool in the hands of the Jews—is an ugly form of mass terrorism and a criminal aggression against the Palestinian people's right to life and legitimate resistance. This siege proves the failure of the peace agreements between some Arab parties and the Jews. We wish to assert that these agreements favor the enemy but are unacceptable to every reasonable and sincere member of our nation.

The fact that this siege and the accompanying demolition of the houses of our people are not being denounced by the outside world, and indeed the fact that they enjoy international backing shows encouragement for the real terrorism by the Zionist Jews. It shows a double standard. The world deprives the Palestinians of the right to resist occupation but encourage the Jews to besiege and kill the Palestinians and demolish their homes. Take the case of Rabin's killer. He was accorded due process of law, including the right to defend himself. His family were not harassed nor was his house demolished. Compare this with what they have done to our brother mujahidin, their families, their towns, and villages. An ugly terrorism is being conducted against our people in the West Bank. This murderous siege targets the Muslims on the land of Palestine.

Jordan: Arrest Campaign Against Hamas Members Reported

JN0104170096 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 1 Apr 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The political and security campaigns launched by the Jordanian Government and security organs against the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement's leadership and cadres continued throughout the past three weeks in response to the Sharm al-

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Shaykh summit resolutions and pressures by both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government.

AL-MAJD learned that Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who visited Amman on the eve of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, brought with him security files containing important information on the Hamas Movement in Jordan. Likewise, the Palestinian security delegation which visited Amman two weeks ago supplied the Jordanian security organs with video tapes of confessions—which were often taken by force—made by Hamas detainees in Gaza who pointed out that they received orders, instructions, and funds from Hamas leaders in Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The security organs launched an arrest campaign in which approximately 15 Islamist cadres, believed to be members of the Hamas Movement, were arrested. Meanwhile, the Prime Ministry launched a political campaign against the Hamas leadership to ruthlessly paralyze its political moves and media activity.

Despite the extreme caution not to announce the names of the detainees, AL-MAJD managed to learn some of these names. They are: Ahmad Farid, Mu'in Shabib, Hisham Abu-Mahfuz, Walid Taylakh, 'Atif al-Khatib, Nasir Hasan, and Ma'mun al-Fararijah.

An informed Jordanian source told AL-MAJD that the prime minister was personally upset and that he protested against a statement recently made to REUTER by Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman for Hamas, in which he asserted that Hamas will continue its line of jihad against the Israeli enemy. The prime minister asked deputy Hamzah Mansur, official spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood deputies, to intercede with Ghawshah to immediately halt such statements.

Moreover, a senior security official contacted Eng. Ghawshah directly and warned him against making such statements again. He also threatened Ghawshah with grave consequences and severe punishment if he reiterates such statements to any local or foreign newspaper or news agency.

The Jordanian source added that the prime minister rejected the mediation of a number of Jordanian Islamic figures to release the detainees. He told them: Anybody proven to be affiliated with the Hamas movement will remain under arrest for a long period. We will get information from the detainees about the sources of financing, secrets related to the organization, and those making decisions in the Hamas Movement.

The prime minister played down the possibility of the Israeli security agencies' assassination of some Hamas leaders in Jordan. However, he did not rule out that [Yasir] 'Arafat's agencies will resort to such actions, not only with the aim of killing these leaders, but also to disrupt security and stability in Jordan.

In a related development, a prominent member of the Palestinian Authority and Fatah Movement, who is now in Amman, cast doubt on the information the Palestinian security agencies extracted through violence and torture of members of the Hamas Movement and the Islamic Jihad Movement in the West Bank and Gaza.

This member cited as an example what happened to Muhammad Abu-Wardah, who was beaten and tortured by Preventive Security Director Jibril al-Rujub and West Bank Intelligence Director Tawfiq al-Tirawi. After being beaten and tortured, Abu-Wardah agreed to make the false confessions and to appear on television to read them.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Reiterates 'Support' for Palestinian People

JN0104171896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti received at his office at the Prime Ministry this morning al-Mutawakil Sa'id Bakr Taha, acting information minister in the Palestinian National Authority. The meeting was attended by Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, minister of information.

They discussed bilateral cooperation and ways of developing and strengthening relations especially in the information fields in the interest of two fraternal peoples.

The prime minister expressed the Jordanian Government's full support, as instructed by His Majesty King Husayn, for the Palestinian brothers in the process of building the authority's establishments, especially the media establishment. He said that Jordan is ready to extend all necessary expertise and capabilities in this field until the objectives and hopes of the Palestinian people to set up their independent state on their national soil are realized.

The Palestinian official expressed appreciation for the Jordanian position in support of the Palestinian people, and said the Palestinian National Authority is proud of the excellent fraternal relations between the two brotherly peoples.

The meeting was attended by Nayif Mawla, secretary general of the Information Ministry.

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Lebanon: Israeli Troops Raid Village Outside Buffer, Search Houses

NC0104195796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1915 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanese police sources have announced that an Israeli army patrol carried out an incursion outside the occupied border strip for the first time in a year. The patrol, comprising seven tanks and 70 troops, entered the village of Arnun and searched its houses before withdrawing.

While the patrol surrounded the village, Israeli combat aircraft overflew the area at low altitude.

The police sources said that the patrol searched the houses in the village, which was deserted by most of its inhabitants. Two hours later the patrol withdrew, firing with heavy machine guns meanwhile.

The Lebanese Army fired antiaircraft guns at the Israeli planes.

Lebanon: Israeli Reinforcements Said Brought Into South

NC0204053696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] While Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres tours the Arab Gulf states, reports from the south this morning speak of reinforcements brought in by the Israeli occupation troops to the occupied border zone. REUTERS reports that Israel has brought in ten 155 and 175-mm guns and 10 personnel carriers to the eastern and western sectors. The Israeli reinforcements come at a time when Israel is discussing moves by the United States and France to calm things down in south Lebanon, as Peres has stated.

Lebanon: Hizballah Radio Reports Islamic Resistance Operations

NC0204064596 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance yesterday continued its strikes against the enemy and its Agents. At 1800 it ambushed an enemy military truck on the Saydun road. When the truck reached the ambush, the mujahidin pounced on it using machine guns and rockets, killing or wounding those inside.

At least three Agents were killed or wounded on the Anan-Safaray road when an Islamic Resistance group yesterday afternoon detonated an explosive device, striking the patrol and damaging a vehicle. Security sources have confirmed that one Lahd militiaman was killed and two were wounded in the operation, which the radio of the [South Lebanese Army] militias has admitted.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Qasim Views Israeli Clarifications, Shelling

NC0204064296 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Na'im Qasim, who is Hizballah's deputy secretary general, has stated that we are not concerned by enemy clarifications following the murder of two civilians in Yatar or in whether these clarifications are true or false, because we are faced with a clear aggression against civilians that must be answered. The enemy must take care in its actions if it really does not want to harm civilians.

In remarks to our radio, Shaykh Qasim added: We believe our reply responds to the shelling of civilians; it has nothing to do with the enemy's motivation. The enemy must realize that our villages and civilians are not an arena open for it to do what it wants. It will be up to us to decide whether we will respond further, in addition to what we have already done. We decide how to act.

Asked about reports that the Zionist enemy is trying to break free of the July understanding, Shaykh Qasim said:

[Begin Qasim recording] I believe the immediate response is the practical [word indistinct] to the so-called July understanding. Perhaps the Israelis will get the message. If there is any [word indistinct] relating to any change in the position of this Israeli enemy, it knows very well how we will respond. [end recording]

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Syria: Egyptian President Arrives, Meets With al-Asad

JN0204120696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak arrived in Damascus at 1130 today on a visit to Syria. President Hafiz al-Asad led those who received him at Damascus International Airport. He was also received by Vice Presidents 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, the ministers, Syria's Ambassador in Cairo Dr. 'Isa Darwish, and Egypt's Ambassador in Damascus Mahmud 'Ali Shukri, and the Egyptian Embassy staff. The president and his guest headed for the People's Palace in an official motorcade.

President Mubarak is accompanied by an official delegation, which includes Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif; Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; Dr. Ahmad Juwayli, minister of trade and supply; Dr. Zakariya 'Azmi, chief of the president's office; and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, director of the president's office for political affairs.

The president and his guest held a meeting after their arrival at the People's Palace. [passage omitted]

The expanded meeting was followed by a closed meeting between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Muhammad Husni Mubarak.

Syria: Information Minister's Statement on al-Asad-Mubarak Talks

NC0204113696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1040 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 2 Apr (MENA)—In their meeting in Damascus today the Egyptian and Syrian sides chaired by President Husni Mubarak and President Hafiz al-Asad respectively reviewed the Arab situation in general and developments in the Middle East peace process as well as current contacts in this regard. They also discussed various international and regional issues.

Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif, who is also a member of the Egyptian delegation to the talks, said this in a statement to MENA. He said that during the meeting they reviewed subjects pertaining to bilateral relations and the topics that will be discussed at the upcoming meetings of the Joint Egyptian-Syrian Higher Committee.

The expanded meeting, which went on for about an hour, turned into a closed session between Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad.

Syria: TISHRIN Blames West for Israeli Nuclear 'Threat' to Arabs

JN0204121696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 2 Apr 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Using Double Standards," TISHRIN contrasts the campaigns launched against the former Soviet Union when the Chernobyl reactor leaked with the silence about the current nuclear leakage in the Negev Desert.

TISHRIN says encouraging Israel to possess nuclear weapons, enabling it to build military nuclear reactors, and keeping silent about its crimes corroborate the fact that the policy of double standards is still controlling the behavior of influential Western nations.

TISHRIN adds: This policy of double-dealing, which is practiced by the advocates of the new international order, is the main cause of the continuation of tension and instability in the region. This policy is also the cause of the current deadlock in the peace process.

TISHRIN goes on: Western aid is what enabled Israel to acquire nuclear weapons and build nuclear reactors for military purposes. Therefore, appeasing Israel can never lead to peace in the region. On the contrary, this will further complicate matters and produce more tension and instability.

TISHRIN asserts that Israel was the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the region. Anyone who thinks that Israel can monopolize this weapon forever is mistaken. There is a general feeling in the Arab nation that Israel's military capabilities pose a direct threat to Arab security, existence, and safety. It is inconceivable that the Arabs will live forever under the threat of Israel's nuclear weapons without doing anything to protect themselves.

The paper adds: Maintaining silence about Israel's aggressive practices and holding international conferences to express solidarity with its aggressive policy prompted the Israeli Government to freeze the peace process and to abandon all the principles on which the peace process was based. If the international community is keen on providing the requirements for stability and peace in the region, it must apply pressure to eliminate Israel's nuclear weapons, remove Israel's nuclear threat, and implement the UN resolutions on Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and recognizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people. If this does not happen, the arms race in the region will continue unabated and the region will continue to experience tension and the threat of new wars.

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Syria: Radio—World, U.S. Should 'Confront Israel's Intransigence'

JN0104154296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: It now seems clear that the peace process persists in its dormancy. Immediately after this process began to move after injecting it with stimulants, it returned to dormancy due to the depressants injected by Israel as well as the polluted climate created by Israel. Hence, the peace process only breathes poisons that cripple it and lead it to a coma and suffocation.

No doubt, this conduct—which Israel pursued for approximately four and a half years and adopted during the past rounds of negotiations—clearly shows that Israel only looks at peace with one eye and wants to acknowledge only one meaning of peace. In other words, Israel only looks at peace through the eye of its ambitions. Israel does not consider any dimension of peace outside the limits of its interests or outside what it can impose either by force or by blackmail.

Hence, the Israeli norms did not take into consideration the real peace based on justice. It does not seem now that Israel tends to accept the just terms of peace in the region. This is because Israel's position on the peace process did not change with the change in the ruling group or the prime minister because it is a strategic position.

This strategic position, however, does not consider the importance of peace and the guarantees it can provide. These guarantees cannot be provided by force regardless of its strength.

Had Israel been really concerned about peace, rather than with evading it, the peace process would not have revolved in a vicious circle, or collided with any Israeli obstacle, or hit any mine which Israel detonated beneath its feet.

We do not think that the international community, led by the United States, which has been involved in the peace process since Madrid, has yet realized the extent of the Israeli efforts designed to keep this process in dormancy.

It goes without saying that this Israeli position—along with all the tampering with peace it entails—is a challenge to the international community in general and to the two cosponsors of the peace process, particularly the United States, because it was the party that unleashed the land-for-peace initiative and proposed itself as a full and honest partner, as it put it.

No doubt, the future of peace in the region greatly depends on the extent of readiness to accept this challenge and deal with Israel in a way that will tame its intransigence and end its tampering.

The international community—with all its influential powers—issued Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. These resolutions are binding and should be implemented. The U.S. initiative was based on these resolutions. The Madrid conference was only held on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the U.S. initiative.

Therefore, vis-a-vis the Israeli rebellion against the international community and the United States, it is only natural for this community and for the United States to confront Israel's intransigence, rebellion, and arrogance if they are really interested in proving their credibility and preserving their prestige and dignity.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rocket Attacks on Kabul Kill 3, Injure 5

LD0104160096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports received from Kabul, yesterday several rockets landed on the city, as a result of which three people were killed and another five were injured.

The Kabul administration's Ministry of Defense blamed the Taleban group for firing the rockets.

It should be pointed out that so far thousands of Kabul citizens have been either killed or injured by Taleban rockets.

According to another report, the Taleban group have admitted firing the rockets on Kabul. Mola 'Abdol Manan Niazi, (?a leader) of the Taleban, said: In response to attacks by the Kabul administration, we have been resorting to firing rockets at them. But when we fire a couple of rockets in reply to their big salvoes, the Kabul administration makes a hue and cry. In his interview with a Pakistani newspaper, Mola 'Abdol Manan Niazi said: We see no alternative except military means for ending the crisis.

He said: We hope the civil population does not sustain losses when the Taleban group decides to resort to (?rocket firing).

Afghanistan: Government Forces Reportedly Foil Taleban Attack

LD0104162296 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An attack by the Taleban group, launched last night from south of Kabul, has been foiled.

BAKHTAR reports that last night, Benazir Bhutto's Taleban started an attack from the direction of Shakh-e Baranti, south of Kabul. Resistance by an Islamic army unit smashed the enemy invasion. Sustaining losses, the Taleban was forced to retreat. The exact figure of losses has not yet been reported.

According to another report, the residential areas of Kabul city last night and today were the targets of five rockets fired by the Taleban group. These rockets mostly landed on the Chehelsotun area, killing one and injuring another nine people.

Afghanistan: Ulema Urged To Oppose Taleban, Pakistani Interference

LD0104200396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ulema [religious scholars] should issue religious edicts [fetwa] on current issues on the basis of Islamic shari'ah principles and with complete liberty.

A BAKHTAR commentator writes:

Current issues and problems in Afghanistan are subjects that should be considered by the international community. Political circles react to these issues in various ways. Without doubt, these issues and problems also require reactions and a constructive approach by the religious ulema. [passage omitted]

The issue of the Bhutto [Pakistani] regime's continuing interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, the main cause of fighting and fratricide in the country, must first be considered.

Everyone now knows that the Bhutto regime has openly been intervening in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and embarking on various conspiracies, and thus they want to pursue their hostile objectives. [passage omitted]

The participation of Benazir Bhutto's personnel in the leadership of the (?Taleban group) [words indistinct], arrest of Pakistan's spies by the Army of the Islamic State, the recent landing of a Pakistani plane at Kandahar airport, bringing Bhutto's generals, are all issues that confirm interference in our country's internal affairs by the Bhutto regime.

Keeping in mind the above issues and dozens of other instances, the country's ulema must recognize intervention as the main cause of fighting in Afghanistan. The ulema should also recognize the mercenary Taleban's actions and behavior -- which are contrary to science, knowledge, and culture — as hostility to Islam and Muslims and oppose them.

In recognizing their duties and on the basis of Mohammad's supreme shari'ah law, the ulema should consult with each other, express their views in the spirit of Islamic liberty, and issue edicts.

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Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Political Parties Urged To Ensure Fair Election

BK0204074596 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the nonparty caretaker government, Justice Habibur Rahman, has set the ball rolling for holding of the next parliamentary election in a free and fair manner. In an address to the nation over radio and television, the former chief justice set the major priorities for creating an atmosphere for such a fair and free poll. Chief Adviser Habibur Rahman said that the maintenance of law and order is a precondition for holding the election peacefully and smoothly. Justice Habibur Rahman said that everybody has to see to it that the law and order situation is not disturbed under any circumstances. For this, the interim administration has to take stern measures, he stressed. He said the interim government will have to take steps to enable the Election Commission to perform its work smoothly. The government is neither concerned nor perturbed in the matter of maintaining law and order, he added.

The chief adviser said that the people of Bangladesh want peace and the government will not hesitate in any way to take most stern measures for the maintenance of law and order, he said in an unequivocal term. He held out assurance that none would be harassed in any way unnecessarily. In curbing crimes, the case would be handed to the criminal courts on the basis of definite allegations under the existing laws and only after investigation.

The chief adviser sought cooperation of all irrespective of their parties and opinions for discharging the (?great) responsibility of the caretaker government. It is the responsibility of all to fulfill the pledge the political parties (?had) made in the Constitution. The responsibility of the citizens are more significant than that of the government employees from one point of view, he added.

The chief adviser made a fervent request to the lawyers to extend their full cooperation to the courts. Adjournment of hearings without valid reasons incurs the loss of money and time and [words indistinct] to both sides in a case. Better requisition [as heard] in respect of court or administration would be investigated into immediately, the chief adviser assured. He categorically said that Special Powers Act would not be applied if work of the government was not rendered difficult beyond any tolerance. The interim government would have to build homes of peace in the country with the cooperation of parents and elders in the family, he said. Justice Habibur Rahman said that [words indistinct] return home and devote themselves to their respective work.

With the installation of a nonparty caretaker government, the hopes and aspirations of the electorates have been fulfilled. What is very important to note here is that all the political parties in Bangladesh had reached a consensus on the means for guaranteeing a caretaker government for supervising future national elections. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the Awami League, the Jatiya Party, and the Jamaat-i-Islami supported the idea of the caretaker government and such an administration has already been installed. It is against this backdrop that all political parties in Bangladesh will cooperate in holding the next parliament elections in the freest and fairest manner.

It is imperative that the parliamentary democracy introduced in 1991 has to be strengthened further to give democracy an institutional shape. If the political parties fail to live up to the expectations of the electorates, the prosperity will not [word indistinct] them. Exactly, this is what the chief adviser implied in his address to the nation.

Bangladesh: Leaders of Political Parties Call on Chief Adviser

BK0104164696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Leaders of various political parties today met chief adviser of caretaker government Habibur Rahman in Dhaka.

A delegation of the Jatiya Party led by acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury called on the chief adviser. The delegation included Begum Raushan Ershad, Barrister Moudud Ahmad, Qazi Zafar Ahmad, and Shah Moazzam Hussain. They congratulated Mr. Habibur Rahman on his assumption of office of the chief adviser. The Jatiya Party leaders pleaded for reorganizing the Election Commission in the interest of a free and fair election. They also stressed the need for including the names of the left-out's in the voters list and to recover illegal arms. The Jatiya Party leaders informed the chief adviser that the former president, Ershad, is sick in jail and demanded his treatment outside the jail.

Gona Forum leaders led by Dr. Kamal Hussain met the chief adviser. The leaders of the party included retired Major General Khaleelur Rahman, Ziaul Haq, Pankaj Bhattacharya, and Sheikh Saifuddin Ahmad Vāni. The Gona Forum leaders stressed the need for reorganizing the election commission, curtailing election expenses, maintaining arms-free atmosphere, and an impartial

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administration in the interest of holding a free and fair election.

Another delegation of JSD [Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal] led by A.S.M. Abdur Rab also met the chief adviser. It included Noor-i-Alam Bikku, Syed Zafar Sajjad, and (Abdul Malik Ratu). They congratulated Mr. Habibur Rahman on his assumption of office of the chief adviser and exchanged views on holding smooth elections. The JSD leaders pleaded for formulating an election procedure in consultation with the political parties and professionals.

The NDP [National Democratic Party] leaders led by Salahuddin Qadir Chowdhury also met the chief adviser. They stressed the need for taking steps to make the economy on a sound footing. Among the NDP leaders, Masannif Khan and Ruhul Amin Sheri were present.

Director General of Bangladesh Ansar [Auxiliary Force] and VDP [Village Defense Party] Major General Anwarul Kabir Talukder called on chief adviser Habibur Rahman at his office in Dhaka today. Gen. Talukder felicitated Mr. Habibur Rahman on his assumption of office and assured him of his full cooperation to the caretaker government.

Bangladesh: Former Prime Minister Zia Calls For Elections in May

BK0204044796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Leaders of various political parties held discussions with Chief Adviser Habibur Rahman in Dhaka yesterday. They discussed [words indistinct] important national issues, particularly ways and means for holding the next parliamentary elections in a peaceful, free, fair, and impartial manner.

A delegation of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, BNP, led by a member of the standing committee, Professor A.K.M. Badruddoja Chowdhury, met the chief adviser. They exchanged views on holding the next parliamentary elections in a free and fair manner. They emphasized the need for neutral administration and security of the voters during the election. Other BNP leaders were Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar, A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman, Saifur Rahman, Oli Ahmed, Dr. Khondaker Mosharraf Hussain, Barrister Zamiruddin Sirkar and Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian.

An Awami League delegation led by party chief Sheikh Hasina also called on the chief adviser. During the meeting, the Awami League leader stressed the need on speedy improvement of law and order situation in the country by recovering all illegal arms for a free and fair election. The party chief said possessors of illegal arms and terrorists should be rounded up irrespective of their party affiliations. She demanded security of the government official, artists and others who had expressed solidarity with the recent movement. She has also called for stoppage of character assassination of political leaders. Awami League leaders — Abdus Salam Azad, Zillur Rahman, Abdul Mannan, Amir Hussain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, S.A.M.S. Kibria, Abdur Razzak, (?Raziul) Haq, and Abdul Momen — were present on the occasion. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, BNP chairperson, Begum Khaleda Zia, has demanded holding of the next parliamentary polls next month. She was talking to newsmen at her party's central office in Dhaka yesterday. The former prime minister assured the caretaker government of all possible support for holding the election in a peaceful, fair, and impartial manner. Begum Zia also called upon the party leaders and workers to extend their organizational work throughout the country.

India

India: Kashmir 'Militant' Reveals Plans To Create Disturbances

BK0104054196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, one of the three militants who surrendered to the police during the recent Hazratbal [shrine] incident, has said that they had intended to take the holy relic into their possession to cause widespread disturbances a day before their encounter with the police on the 23d of last month. Talking to newsmen in Srinagar yesterday, the militant, Abdus Samad, said they tried to break open the locks of the sanctum sanctorum and put the shrine on fire when they were holed up there. Narrating the details of various acts of desecration indulged in by the militants, he said that the hard-core among them did not allow others to surrender at any stage in response to the call by the police.

India: Islamabad TV—Kashmir Situation 'Extremely Volatile'

BK0104134896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The situation remains extremely volatile in the held Kashmir Valley as life remained paralyzed on the second day of four-day mourning for the brutal massacre of more than 20 people by Indian forces. Most of the streets of Srinagar are deserted and shops and businesses are shut. The death toll has reached 26 with the recovery of four more charred bodies from the debris of the house near dargah [shrine]

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Hazratbal destroyed by Indian troops. Furious anti-India demonstrations also continued at various places besides Srinagar. Indian security forces resorted to heavy lathi [baton] charge and excessive tear gassing to disperse demonstrators in various localities, including Mehsana, Patmalu, Polo Ground, Naushera, Khaniar, Nauhata, and Lal Bazaar.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference in a meeting in Srinagar today approved a program of collective agitation to attract world attention to the genocidal military operation in occupied Kahsmir. Mir Waiz Omar Farooq announced that the program would be spelt out at a huge rally at the Jamia Mosque, Srinagar on Friday [5 April] marking the qul [religious ceremony] of the martyrs of Hazratbal.

India: Pakistan To Send 'Special Strike Forces' to Kashmir

BK0104130296 Jaipur RAJASTHAN PATRIKA in Hindi 20 Mar 96 p 1, 16

[PTI Report]

[FBIS Translated Text] New Delhi, 19 March: Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence, ISI, is sending 'special strike forces' to Jammu and Kashmir in order to disrupt the peace and political process by targeting selected persons and politicians. This information was given by highly placed official sources here today.

The sources disclosed that a large number of foreign mercenaries are waiting for the snow to melt in the mountainous valley of Jammu and Kashmir before infiltrating India. Most of them are Sudanese and Afghan nationals. These strike forces are currently concentrated at the border near the Line of Control. They want to carry out subversive activities and assassinations.

The sources said that in the coming months there will be a flurry of activity at the international border and on the Line of Control, especially in Punch sector and Kupwara.

The sources said Pakistan will make great efforts to infiltrate armed assailants into the Kashmir valley. They said that in view of the increasing pressure of security forces on the militants, Pakistan wants the proxy war in Kashmir to be intensified. It is worth mentioning that many militant groups have surrendered to the authorities in recent months.

According to the sources, the desire expressed by various militant organizations, including some pro-Pakistani groups, to hold talks with the central government without conditions has upset the perverse designs of ISI. The sources said Pakistan is now relying on the Kashmir militants. That is why it has concentrated a large number of foreign mercenaries on the Line of Control to infiltrate the valley.

The sources said that the increase of shooting incidents from across the border are to assess the vigil of Indian security forces and provide cover for the armed infiltrators.

In an interview with UNITED NEWS OF INDIA, Jammu and Kashmir Chief secretary Ashok Kumar said the people are very keen to see peace and normality return to the state. He said the security forces are maintaining immense pressure on the militants and that they have achieved significant success during the winter. He said according to the reports received by officials, there is a possibility of increased activity at the Pakistani border. Kumar denied the reports of an exodus from Doda District. He said that people had gone to lower areas during the winter. He said although the incidents of violence increased in Doda District, security forces were able to bring the situation under control.

India: Ambassador to Egypt Denies Nuclear Cooperation With Israel

NC3003184896 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 7

[Interview with Indian Ambassador to Egypt Kanual Sibal by correspondent Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] ['Arafah] Why is India refusing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] and cooperating with Israel in nuclear research?

[Sibal] First of all, we totally deny that there are relations with Israel in the field of nuclear weapons and nuclear technology. Our position on the NPT is a principled one. India refuses to sign the NPT because the treaty is biased in favor of the major nuclear powers, which want to monopolize nuclear decisionmaking even though the nuclear ban applies to all countries. We ask: Why are some countries retaining their nuclear capability even though Article 6 of the NPT stresses the need to abandon the nuclear option within certain time frames? Why are some nuclear countries conducting nuclear tests and stationing nuclear weapons in other parts of the world? All nations must be treated equally before India can sign the NPT. In 1988 we submitted a proposal for eliminating nuclear weapons within 22 years. But these countries are refusing to take any step in this direction. They are even refusing to admit that the use of nuclear weapons is illegal. The problem with these nuclear countries is that they have no program

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for dismantling these weapons. In light of this situation, India cannot sign a treaty that is biased and unfair.

['Arafah] Indian-Pakistani relations have frequently been tense because of the Kashmir problem. India recently deployed missiles on the border between the two countries. Why don't the two countries cooperate to solve this problem? Why does India not let the people of Kashmir determine their own future by means of a plebiscite?

[Sibal] China possesses all kinds of missiles, and has given some of them to Pakistan. The United States is contemplating imposing sanctions on China for giving M-11 missiles to Pakistan. China has given CSS missiles to Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Korea. Russia, which is a nuclear power, has many missiles in the region. Thus, India is surrounded by countries that possess all kinds of missiles. India began a missile development program in 1984. India now has five kinds of missiles—antitank, surface-to-air, air-to- surface, short-range, and long-range missiles. If Pakistan and the other countries surrounding India have missiles, why shouldn't India? The Indian nuclear program is designed to confront all threats from all sources.

As regards the Kashmir problem, we must remember that India referred the problem from the beginning to the United Nations, with the aim of reaching a peaceful solution. [passage omitted] Pakistan was not enthusiatic about this, fearing that the result would be in favor of India. [passage omitted]

India: Commentary Views Expected Transfer of U.S. Arms to Pakistan

BK3103133596 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Commentary by Sabita Pandey]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Clinton administration in all likelihood will go ahead with the Brown Amendment — which seeks to deliver the embargoed U.S. arms worth $368 million — despite media reports to the contrary. Although the U.S. secretary of state, Warren Christopher, has said in a testimony before the congressional panel on foreign operations that the U.S. Administration plans to implement the said operations in a most responsible way, confusion remains regarding what is implied.

The issue of U.S. arms supply to Pakistan has become more complicated recently because of Central Intelligence Agency's recent reports regarding supply of 5,000 ring magnets from China to Pakistan. These magnets are ostensibly for the uranium enrichment plant in Pakistan. The Sino-Pakistan transaction is a violation of the U.S. antiproliferation law, resulting in the demand in Congress of putting in abeyance the implementation of the Brown Amendment pending an inquiry into it. The Brown Amendment became a law in January 1996. It seeks a one-time waiver on the 1985 Pressler Amendment prohibiting aid to Pakistan unless the President of the United States certifies that Pakistan does not possess the nuclear device. The U.S. aid to Pakistan was first stopped in 1978 under the Symington-Glenn Amendment, only to be restored a year later after the Soviets intervened in Afghanistan.

In fact, with the massive rearming of Pakistan despite its weapon-grade nuclear program, the U.S. wants to seek strategic balance in the region. What is even more interesting is that it was despite this aid cutoff by then President George Bush, Pakistan continued to pay for the F-16's promised under the original deal. It is possible that Pakistan believed that the sanctions would not stay. It is, therefore, very likely that Pakistan is now being rewarded for its belief, although the deal does not include the F- 16's. The U.S. Administration's plans include disposing of F-16's contracted by Pakistan and return the $658 million.

The U.S. Administration is not very correct in saying that the implications of supplying arms worth $368 million would be marginal. It needs to be noted that this was the cost of arms proposed to be supplied at pre-1990 prices under the foreign military sales arrangements. Its current value would be closer to $450 million. The implications of these supplies are more serious. They definitely impinge upon military balance in the region.

The supply of P-3C Orions, the long-range maritime and strike aircraft capable of launching antiship sea-skimming cruise missile like the Harpoons besides antisubmarine warfare capabilities, making them a very potent offensive weapon. The P-3C ordered by Pakistan were with update, too, which incorporated the Harpoon antiship sea- skimming 110 km range missiles. With the P-3C having a mission radius of 3,834 km, shipping even as far as Cochin in south India, 1,000 km south of Bombay, would be open to Pakistani attacks with Harpoon or Exocet-armed P-3C's. Indian Navy surface fleet and merchant shipping carrying 80 percent of India's trade will be susceptible to P-3C attacks throughout the Arabian Sea. The vulnerabilities will be acute because India has not set up any defense infrastructure like radars in the region.

Besides, the supply of four AN/TPQ-36 fire-finding radars, artillery-locating radars, would more than double the Pakistani Army's capability in the area. So would that of ALQ-31 electronic jamming pods for its Air Force. Further, the supply of towed heavy artillery guns

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will increase Pakistan's heavy artillery and high- caliber gun strength to 434. Then there are 18 (?Sea Knight) forward looking infrared [word indistinct] for (?TOW) sights worth $24.1 million, apparently for 24-wheel Cobra-AH1's held by Pakistan, which are armed with eight TOW missiles each. These add to the offensive punch of the armored strike forces.

The U.S. is also planning to transfer a number of ALQ airborne electronic warfare jamming pods. Mounted externally under the wings of F-16's, these planes [as heard] provide a powerful electronic warfare jamming capability. Pakistan has already acquired a significant number of such pods now sought to be transferred by the U.S. Government, apparently for mounting on further batches totaling 71 F-16's ordered by Pakistan held up because of its acquisition of nuclear weapons. Does this mean F-16's may still be supplied through other methodologies? It hardly needs to be recalled that Jordan had transferred a whole squadron of F-104S Star Fighter combat aircraft to Pakistan with U.S. approval during the war in 1971.

India: Commentary Rejects U.S. Plan for Expanding Security Council

BK0104125996 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Commentary by Rai Singh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Comparison can be odious, but discrimination is always objectionable and unworthy of acceptance in any international forum. Hence, India's rejection of the suggestion that after the admission of Japan and Germany as the new permanent members of the UN Security Council a formula based on regional consensus or endorsement can be devised for the admission of other developing countries in the expanded UN Security Council has been outrightly rejected by India.

It may be recalled that at the San Francisco conference of international organizations which helped frame the UN Charter in the early 1940's, the principle of equality of nations was accepted as the basic principle of the UN. Only in the case of the UN Security Council, special consideration was shown to the five victors of the World War II — namely the USA, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and China — by conferring on them the permanent membership of the UN Security Council, the main UN organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. This was done with a view to ensuring that in the post-world war era these powers did not fall out among themselves and thus endangering international peace and security. The veto power inherent in the permanent membership of the UN Security Council was supposed to counterbalance each of these five permanent powers. One may say, and perhaps rightly so, that the conferment of the permanent membership of the Security Council was arbitrary if not discriminatory. This may be so, but keeping in view the post-war political scenario, this was inevitable.

It is interesting to recall that Japan and Germany belonged to the Axis powers group who had waged war against the Allied powers. Hence, after their defeat in the war, Japan and Germany were described as the enemy states in the UN Charter and continued to be barred from the UN membership for decades. How come the victors of the World War II — namely the USA and other Western powers — are now so eager to get in Japan and Germany as the permanent members of the UN? It has been argued that the induction of Germany and Japan as the permanent members of the UN Security Council would ease the now desperate financial position of the UN, because as permanent members of the Security Council they would make substantial contribution to the UN funds. In other words, it is the money power that is calling the tune in the UN. This was not only discriminatory but dangerous too, because in the long run international peace and security would be at the mercy of the moneybags of the world. This would be violative of the letter and spirit of the UN Charter.

Another question is: Why this double standard? The proposal to first get in Japan and Germany as permanent members and then admit other countries on the principle of regional endorsement is preposterous and hence unworthy of any consideration. India's permanent representative at the UN, Ambassador Mr. Prakash Shah, while addressing the UN working group considering the expansion of the Security Council, has reiterated that the criteria for admission as permanent members should apply equally to all the UN members, and as the U.S. proposal to get in Germany and Japan as permanent members does not follow the criteria, hence it is rejected. Mr. Shah said, quote: My delegation rejects blatantly discriminatory treatment; preferred treatment for industrialized countries and second-class treatment for developing countries, unquote. Nothing could be more explicit.

What is surprising is that the regional consensus or endorsement has been given a go by the case of Germany and Japan, whereas it is being prescribed as the essential condition for the admission of a developing country as the permanent member of the Security Council. The obvious stratagem is that because of this condition, hopeful entrants for the permanent membership would get entangled into regional rivalries and possibly conflicts. Thus the whole issue would remain moribund and the

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present order would continue to hold sway, come what may. The stratagem has well been planned, but it would be presumptuous on the part of the powers that be that they have laid down the law for the admission of the new permanent members of the expanded UN Security Council.

India: Russian Foreign Minister Arrives on Official Visit

BK3003080496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Russian foreign minister, Mr. Yevgeniy Primakov, has arrived in New Delhi on a two-day official visit. He is the first Russian foreign minister to visit India after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Mr. Primakov will have extensive talks with the external affairs minister on bilateral and international matters.

India: External Affairs Minister Receives Russian Counterpart

BK3003085096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Russia have agreed to strengthen bilateral ties in several fields. The entire gamut of bilateral cooperation came up for discussion at the talks between the Russian foreign minister, Mr. Yevgeniy Primakov, and the external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, in New Delhi today. They also discussed regional and international issues. The two sides will sign three agreements later today. These include setting up of a hotline linking Kremlin and the Indian prime minister's office and Indo-Russian scientific and technical cooperation for two years.

India: Accords Signed With Russia; Ministers Hold News Conference

BK3003160996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Russia have declared that strengthening their bilateral relations is not against any country, including China. The visiting Russian foreign minister, Mr. Yevgeniy Primakov, has also voiced Moscow's full support to India's stand that the Kashmir issue should be resolved bilaterally by New Delhi and Islamabad.

He was addressing a joint press conference with the external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, after signing three agreements by the two sides. The agreements are setting up of a hot line between the Kremlin and the Prime Minister's Office in New Delhi; scientific, educational, and cultural exchange for two years; and cooperation between their science academies.

India: Article Views Possible 'Entente Cordiale' With Russia, PRC

BK3103093796 Madras THE HINDU in English 30 Mar 96 p 6

[Article by C. Raja Mohan: "India, Russia, China: An Entente Cordiale?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As the three major non-Western powers of the international system — Russia, China and India — struggle to define a modus vivendi with the West and expand their own space in global politics, they are likely to find it convenient to draw closer to each other. The visit to New Delhi this weekend by the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Yevgeniy Primakov, and the scheduled trip to China next month by the Russian President, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, could reveal the opportunities and limitations of an Asian entente cordiale.

Russia, China and India are all experiencing a difficult phase in their relations with the West, as they strive to effect fundamental economic, social and political change within their own societies. Although enhanced cooperation among the three Asian majors appears logical and could enhance their individual national interests, it would be unwise to overlook the significant difficulties in building an Asian strategic partnership.

The bilateral relations among the three Asian powers have not always been steady and have seen some wild oscillations over the recent decades. Russia, China and India all value the importance of a cooperative relationship with the United States and are not in favour of a collective confrontation with the West. None of the three Asian powers is interested in building a structure of relations in Asia that will be seen as "anti-Western".

Russia, China and India are, however, in search of greater manoeuvring room for themselves, as they chafe under the Western dominance over international politics at the end of the Cold War. While an Eastern alliance against the West is out of question, an Asian entente cordiale — or a greater understanding between the three powers to minimise their own contradictions and expanding strategic cooperation — is entirely within the realm of diplomatic possibility.

Russia, China and India are all seeking to redefine their relations with the United States and the West, as they find some of their earlier expectations of enhanced cooperation with the West have failed to materialise. There has been deep disillusionment in Russia at the Western failure to be a gracious partner and there is a recognition in Moscow of the importance of looking

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East to give its foreign policy greater balance. Under Mr. Primakov's leadership, Russian foreign policy is now widely seen as returning to the pursuit of national self interest, and firmly moving away from an uncritical tailing of the West.

In Beijing, there are growing apprehensions that the United States is drifting into a policy of containment against China, as bilateral tensions over trade, human rights, Tibet and Taiwan have mounted since the end of the Cold War. In India, the earlier hopes for a dramatic improvement of ties with the United States have yielded to a new determination to develop an independent foreign policy.

As Moscow, Beijing and New Delhi have stepped up their efforts to expand their foreign policy options, they have inevitably moved towards improving bilateral relations among themselves. Sino- Russian relations have expanded significantly in the last few years. There is some concern in the United States about the consequences of a deepening Sino-Russian strategic cooperation. Many believe such a cooperation could inevitably move in an anti-Western course and could return Asia to a new Cold War. But there are others who see the limits to such a cooperation, given the unwillingness of either Moscow or Beijing to really confront the United States.

Indo-Russian relations that had acquired enormous density over three decades of intensive cooperation went into a tailspin in the early 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the last couple of years the two sides have worked hard to rebuild bilateral ties. The visit of Mr. Primakov this week, despite the impending elections in both countries, is reflective of the new stability in Indo-Russian cooperation.

There has been greater warmth in Sino-Indian relations in the recent years, but they have a long way to go before they acquire a strategic dimension. While India and China do share many common global objectives, the enduring Sino-Pak strategic cooperation and its impact on regional dynamics has tended to limit the possibilities of Sino-Indian cooperation. New Delhi and Beijing need to ensure that their bilateral relations do not lag behind the Sino-Russian and Indo-Russian relations.

Convergence of perspectives

On a number of international and regional issues there is an emerging convergence of Russian, Chinese and Indian perspectives. The preservation of large multi-ethnic societies, the consolidation of national unity, the defence of national sovereignty against the onslaught of the "New World Order," and the combating of international terrorism and religious extremism are some of the areas of convergence at the global plane.

At the regional level, the on-going geo-political developments in Central Asia and Afghanistan have made it imperative for Russia, China and India to step up their consultations and look for greater coordination of their policies. The American diplomatic activism in the oil-rich, politically volatile and strategically critical Central Asia has raised concerns in Russia, China and India about the long term implications for their own national security.

It is in this context that Mr. Primakov will arrive in New Delhi on Saturday to a red carpet welcome. The visit is expected to help deepen Indo-Russian political dialogue, lay the basis for a bilateral strategic partnership and initiate substantive and sustained consideration of larger geo-politics in Asia.

India: Russian Minister Urges Signing of Nuclear Treaties

BK3103124996 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 31 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by a "special correspondent"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Russia wants India to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), now being negotiated in Geneva.

This was asserted by the Russia Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov while addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Saturday.

In a separate interview to THE PIONEER, Mr Primakov offered to support India's claim for a permanent membership in the UN Security Council. As to the cancellation of the technology-transfer aspect of the cryogenic engine deal in the past, Mr Primakov said that "a way has been found keeping in view Russia's international obligations".

When Mr Primakov, who is on a two-day visit to India, was asked whether Russia in the near future will sell arms to Pakistan, Mr Primakov replied that "we do not have such plans."

Earlier, Russia and India signed an agreement for setting up of direct hotline between the Indian Prime Minister's residence and the Kremlin. The agreement was signed by the Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov and the Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee. Both the Foreign Ministers also signed an agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation between the two countries. Apart from this, an agreement

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between the Indian National Science Academy and the Russian Academy of Sciences was also signed.

Mr. Primakov, who reached in New Delhi on Saturday morning, is the first Russian Foreign Minister to visit this country after the Soviet Union's disintegration in 1991.

Mr. Primakov also had detailed discussions with the External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee. The talks focussed on bilateral as well as regional issues. Mr. Primakov also met president Shankar Dayal Sharma and the Vice President K.R. Narayanan.

Later in the day, both Mr. Primakov and Mr. Mukherjee addressed a Press conference at Vigyan Bhavan [a conference hall]. Addressing press persons, both the ministers reiterated the strong ties between the two countries.

[Madras THE HINDU in English on 31 March in a similar report adds: "India and Russia have decided to work together on Afghanistan, as part of a strategic partnership to help stabilise the region.

["'We agreed on the formulation that the territorial integrity of Afghanistan be maintained. There should be no third party interference and the U.N. peace initiative should be given a chance', the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, said soon after holding a joint press conference with the visiting Russian Foreign Minister Mr. Yevgeniy M. Primakov.

["According to Mr. Mukherjee, both sides agreed that the Pakistan-backed Taleban military 'should not be allowed to take an upper hand in Afghanistan', adding that the formulation adopted during 'intensive discussions' went beyond references to the Taleban.

["'There is now a need for frequent consultation at various levels,' he observed"]

India: Prime Minister Confers With Russian Foreign Minister

BK3103155296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Russian foreign minister, Mr. Y.M. Primakov, called on the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, in New Delhi today. During the meeting, both the leaders expressed satisfaction at the steady growth of relations between the two countries. Mr. Primakov conveyed the greetings of the Russian president and the prime minister to Mr. Rao, which he warmly reciprocated.

India: Army Called Out To Maintain Order in Shillong

BK0104155396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Army has been called out in the Meghalaya capital, Shillong, to assist the civil administration in maintaining law and order in the violence-hit areas of the city. The state police chief, Mr. D.M. Shrivastav, told newsmen that one column of the Army staged a flag march in the affected areas. One battalion of CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force] has also been requisitioned by the state government. He also said that 20 policemen, including one inspector general and two SP's [superintendents of police], were injured when the mob hurled stones at them. Meanwhile, there have been reports of setting ablaze of a few houses resulting the death of a small girl. As reported, curfew has been imposed in the city since this evening.

India: Government Declares JKLF 'Unlawful Association'

BK3003123796 Madras THE HINDU in English 29 Mar 96 p 7

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Central Government has declared the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) as an unlawful association under the Unlawful Activity (Prevention) Act, 1967, according an official press note here today.

The JKLF is an association actually based in Pakistan and London and has sympathisers, supporters and agents on the Indian soil, especially in J&K State, indulging openly in unlawful activities for secession of the State from the Union of India.

The notification has been published in the Gazette of India Extra-Ordinary Part II Section 3, Sub Section (II) on 18th February, 1996, which listed grounds for declaring the JKLF as unlawful association.

The grounds listed in the notification for declaring the JKLF as an unlawful association, inter-alia, include that the JKLK has openly declared as its aim secession of the State of J&K [Jammu & Kashmir] from the Union of India and to achieve this purpose it has been mobilising Kashmiri youth with the help of Pakistan Inter Service Intelligence (ISI), exhorting them to intensify the armed struggle against the State Government established by law, to achieve liberation of the State and indulging in activities prejudicial to the security and territorial integrity of India. The association has been spearheading a campaign for uniting militant outfits professing secession and has been opposing holding elections in

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the State thereby obstructing the people from exercising their basic democratic and constitutional rights. The group has indulged in militant acts including abductions, shoot outs and threatening employees of the State and large quantities of arms and ammunition continue to be recovered from its activists.

The group is sending youths for training across the border and, to disrupt life, has been giving hartal [strike] calls.

The JKLF has been making open announcements prejudicial to the interest of the nation and having serious repercussions for the integrity and security of India.

The group warned the people of the State from paying taxes and asked the Government employees not to submit their property statements.

The Central Government is the opinion that because of its continued activities aimed at secession and the reported acts of violence and attacks by its armed groups on the security forces and on the civilian population, it is necessary to declare the JKLF to be unlawful with immediate effect.

India: BJP's National Vice President Resigns

BK0204023996 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 1 Apr 96

[Beg's comments and unidentified correspondent's questions in Hindi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The vice president of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], Mr. Arif Beg, has resigned from the party. Mr. Beg said his decision was final after an emergency meeting this afternoon with party president, Mr. L.K. Advani. Our correspondent Mayank Agarwal reports:

[Begin recording] [Agarwal] All major political parties are facing resentment over alliances and distribution of party tickets even as deadline fast approaches for filing of nominations. The BJP suffered a setback with its national vice president, Mr. Arif Beg, resigning from the party.

[Beg, briefing newsmen] I have (?severed) my 22-year-old relationship with the BJP today.

[Agarwal] He said that the BJP has not given proper representation to the minorities in the distribution of tickets for the forthcoming election. All the same, Mr. Beg still plans to contest Lok Sabha elections.

[Beg] I will run the elections.

[Unidentified correspondent] On which (?party's ticket)?

[Beg] This has not been decided yet.

[Correspondent] So, you want to join any party?

[Beg] Look, if I have to remain in politics, then I will have to join a party.

[Agarwal] The BJP president, Mr. L.K. Advani, who had an hour-long meeting with Mr. Beg today, declined to make any comment.

[Advani, coming out of a room at unidentified place] I have nothing to say. [end recording]

India: Minister Ram Singh Resigns Over Denial of Lok Sabha Ticket

BK2903162196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union minister of state for wasteland development, Colonel Ram Singh, has resigned from both the union Council of Ministers and the Congress-I and has announced that he is joining the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP].

Addressing a press conference at the BJP party office in New Delhi this evening, Col. Ram Singh said the major provocation for his resignation from the Congress was the denial of a Lok Sabha ticket.

India: Ministers Accused in Money Scandal Denied Election Tickets

BK0204034696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress-I has decided not to give party tickets to the former ministers charge-sheeted in the hawala [illegal money transfer] case. In a press statement last night, the party general secretary, Mr. Janardhana Poojaray, said that considering the present situation, it is not feasible to give Congress tickets to the seven former ministers who resigned on being charge-sheeted by the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation]. He said the decision will remain in force until the cases against them are disposed of. Meanwhile, the former union minister, Mr. Vidya Charan Shukla, charge-sheeted by the CBI in the hawala case, has announced that he will contest the coming Lok Sabha election from Raipur and Mahasamund constituencies in Madhya Pradesh. He was speaking to newsmen at Raipur.

The Congress-I has released its fifth list of candidates for the coming Lok Sabha polls and assembly elections in Haryana and union territory of Pondicherry. It includes 148 candidates for the Lok Sabha, 90 for Haryana assembly, and 18 for Pondicherry assembly. Out of the 148 candidates for Lok Sabha, 18 are from Rajasthan, 10 from Haryana, 36 from West Bengal, 19 from Maharashtra, eight from Andhra Pradesh, 17 from Uttar

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Pradesh, 29 from Tamil Nadu, five from Orissa, two from Arunachal Pradesh, and one each from Meghalaya, Manipur, Goa, and Pondicherry. With the latest list, the Congress-I has so far declared candidates for 377 Lok Sabha constitutes. Union ministers — Captain Satish Sharma, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, Ms. Selja, Mr. Eduardo Faleiro, and Mr. K.V. Thangkabalu — figured in the list. The former Indian ambassador to U.S., Mr. Siddhartha Shankar Ray; Rajasthan PCC-I [Pradesh — state — Congress Committee-I] president, Mr. Ashok Gehlot; and Tamil Nadu PCC-I president, Mr. Kumri Anandan have also been given tickets.

As the party has announced candidates for the 29 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu, the remaining 10 have been left to its electoral partner — AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam]. The union ministers — Mr. P. Chidambaram and Mr. Arunchalam — do not figure in the list.

In another list, the party also released the names of candidates for six Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir [J and K]. The J and K PCC-I president, Mr. Ghulam Rasul Kar, figures in the list.

India: Kashmir Governor Claims Situation Conducive for Elections

BK0104093896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The governor of Jammu and Kashmir, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has reiterated that the situation in the state is conducive for holding elections. Addressing a press conference in Jammu today, he said the government will take all necessary steps to ensure free and fair elections. He assured full security to candidates, political workers, and leaders for electioneering in the valley and other parts of the state. The governor reiterated his appeal to all political parties, including the Hurriyat Conference, to take part in the elections and prove their credentials as representatives of the people.

Gen. Rao asserted that state assembly elections will be held soon after the Lok Sabha elections. He said these will expose Pakistan's gameplan in Kashmir and full normalcy can be restored only after that. Gen. Krishna Rao said security within the state and also on the border has been tightened to foil any attempt by militants and their mentor Pakistan to disturb the election process.

India: Delhi Radio Reports Election-Related Developments 1 Apr

BK0104164496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Filing of nominations, releasing of lists of candidates by the parties, and finalization of seat adjustments and alliances for the Lok Sabha and assembly elections in six states have reached a crescendo. The nomination filing is to end on Wednesday evening. Over 100 nominations were filed today. The Janata Dal, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, All India Indira Congress-Tiwari, and the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam], Asom Gana Parishad [AGP], and the CPI [Communist Party of India] are among the parties which released their lists today. For some, it was their second, third, or fourth list. The ruling Congress-I, which already released four lists consisting of 229 candidates for the Lok Sabha polls, is to release another list late tonight.

The Janata Dal president, Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav, released the list of 164 candidates for the Lok Sabha in New Delhi today. He said the party will be contesting 200 constituencies, leaving the rest to its state-level allies. Prominent among the party's candidates announced today are Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, Mr. Sharad Yadav, and Mr. Mufti Muhammad Sayeed from Bihar; Professor Madhu Dandavate from Maharashtra; and Ms. Maneka Gandhi from Uttar Pradesh. The party is still continuing its talks for tie-ups with the AGP in Assam and the All India Indira Congress-Tiwari in several states besides Madhya Pradesh.

The BJP released its fourth list consisting of 26 candidates for the Lok Sabha and nine for the Haryana Assembly. Of the 19 candidates announced in Maharashtra, three, including Mr. Ram Naik, are sitting members of the Lok Sabha and two, including Mr. Pramod Mahajan, are members of the Rajya Sabha. With this, the BJP has announced its candidates for 436 Lok Sabha seats.

The Bahujan Samaj Party released the names of its candidates for all the 85 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh. The list includes the party president, Mr. Kanshi Ram, and six members of the breakaway Uttar Pradesh unit of the Janata Dal which merged with it recently. The All India Indira Congress-Tiwari also released another list of its candidates today, including 26 candidates for the Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh. The fourth list of the Samajwadi Party includes six names for the Lok Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh. The party also announced its nominees for nine seats in Gujarat and one in Rajasthan.

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The CPI announced names of 14 of its candidates, including three for Kerala and two each for Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu. In Assam, the main opposition party, AGP, released its third list of assembly and Lok Sabha candidates for the forthcoming elections. The Gurkha National Liberation Front in West Bengal has decided to contest all the four assembly seats in the Darjeeling District while boycotting the elections to the Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat. In Pondicherry, the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] has decided to field four of its sitting MLA's [members of legislative assembly] for the assembly polls in the union territory.

The Shiv Sena and the BJP have finalized the agreement on seat adjustments for the Lok Sabha polls in Maharashtra.

Over 100 nominations were filed in various states today. In the Kashmir Valley, the first three nominations from Anantnag parliamentary constituency were filed. A candidate each from the Panthers Party and the Janata Dal besides an independent submitted their papers. [passage omitted].

Twelve Congress-I MP's from Tamil Nadu, including the union minister, Mr. Thangabalu, have urged the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao, to expel Mr. G.K. Moopanar and his associates from the party with immediate effect. In a signed statement in New Delhi today, they alleged that Mr. Moopanar and others with him have betrayed the party by going with the DMK. Talking to newsmen, one of the signatories to the statement, Mr. Manishankar Aiyer, said that the Congress-I will not suffer in any way because of Mr. Moopanar and his associates leaving the party. Meanwhile, the list of constituencies to be contested by the Moopanar group of the Congress-I in alliance with the DMK has been finalized. According to a DMK press release in Madras, the Moopanar faction will contest 20 Lok Sabha and 40 assembly seats in Tamil Nadu.

The Election Commission has taken strong exception to the announcement of new schemes in violation of the modal code by certain municipalities, corporations, and panchayats [village councils] in Kerala. In an order issued today, it directed immediate cancellation of all new schemes and projects announced or implemented after the 19th of last month. The chief secretary to the Kerala Government has been asked to send a compliance report by Wednesday. The commission particularly referred to the inclusion of some new schemes and projects by the Kottayam Municipal Council in its budget passed after the announcement of elections.

One of the founder leaders of the ruling AIADMK and a senior minister in the Jayalalith Cabinet, Mr. K. Krishnaswamy, resigned today. A UNI report from Madras says that the resignation is in protest against the denial of party ticket to him for the assembly elections.

India: CPI Releases Election Manifesto; Visualizes Coalition

BK2903093496 Madras THE HINDU in English 28 Mar 96 p 7

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Communist Party of India (CPI) today released its election manifesto with the party general secretary, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, confidently predicting a change in the "balance of power at the Centre" after the Lok Sabha elections. He foresaw a "collapse" of the Congress (I) and said the "vacuum" thus created, could be filled only by a broad coalition of the Left, secular and democratic forces.

Mr. Gupta, paraphrasing the manifesto, ruled out the possibility of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] replacing the Congress (I) in New Delhi and said that the people were "groping" for an alternative to both these parties. If the Congress (I) took four and a half decades to sink itself into the "mire" of corruption, the BJP managed it in four and a half years as its record in States where it had been in power showed. With both thus in the dock, the future belonged to the Left and its allies, depending of course on how they approached the electorate.

Asked if the CPI would share power with a coalition of like- minded parties, Mr. A.B. Bardhan, author of the manifesto, said: "We will cross the bridge when we come to it." Pressed to elaborate, he indicated that the party would not be averse to the idea if it was invited to join such a coalition. He shared Mr Gupta's view that there was no question of the Congress (I) returning to power. "It is absolutely certain that they are nowhere in the picture," he declared with his characteristic aplomb.

There is very little difference between the party's 1991 election manifesto and the present one, except that the attack on the Congress (I) is somewhat sharper. Mr. Gupta conceded that there was nothing "new" in terms of "details," but said the "perspective" was different.

After posing the question, "You might ask, so what's new this time," he explained: "In the past it was generally understood that the ruling party would come back to power, and barring a few occasions that's what happened. This time, however, the situation is different. The old balance of power is breaking down and it is time for radical changes."

When Mr. Gupta was asked why the third alternative was taking so long to emerge and wouldn't further delay

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hurt its electoral prospects, he retorted: "There is no magic wand. I can't pull it out of my pocket." Mr. Bardhan counselled patience saying: "Wait for a few more days."

The 15-page manifesto follows the CPI(M) "model" in appealing to the voters, and instead of identifying its allies it urges the electorate to vote for "secular democratic forces." In 1991, both the Communist parties had identified the National Front as their ally and appealed for vote on its behalf. This time, however, both have refrained from mentioning the names of their allies leaving it to the voters to decide for themselves which, in their view, are "secular democratic" forces.

Blistering Criticism of Congress

The manifesto starts off with a blistering criticism of the Congress (I), arguing that it is "no longer fit to rule," and concludes that its chances of gaining a majority on its own are "nonexistent." The CPI's main "charge" against the Congress (I) is that its economic policies are "anti-poor," corruption under the Narasimha Rao government has become endemic, secularism has taken a beating, criminalisation of politics has spread and the entire administration stands "paralysed" because of the "hawala" [illegal money transfer] scandal.

"The Congress is clearly unable and unfit to rule (and) the country is no longer safe in Congress hands," is how the manifesto sums up the party's perception of the ruling party.

The BJP, despite its claim to be the "party-in-waiting," is nowhere near power, the manifesto contends, pointing out that it stands "exposed" on many counts. Apart from its role in spreading communalism, it has shown itself to be speaking in two voices on economic policies.

"Its so-called economic nationalism is a crude mixture of swadeshi demagogy and actual support to the liberalisation policy of the Congress." It says and, to illustrate the point refers to the manner in which the Enron deal was "renegotiated" by the BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra.

Corruption, as symbolised by the charge sheeting of its President Mr. L.K. Advani in the "hawala" case and intra-party factionalism are among the other factors which the manifesto counts against the BJP. On factionalism it says: "The Khajuria-Hajuria fight in Gujarat has caught the attention of the whole country. It has torn to shreds the BJP's boast that it is a party with a difference. With only a whiff of power, its power-hungry members are at each other's throat."

The manifesto argues that given the BJP's "record," it is unlikely that the people would agree to "jump from the frying pan into the fire" — the "frying pan" being the Congress and the "fire" the BJP. "Only a coalition of the Left, secular and democratic parties and forces can pave the way for this (and) the Left parties have a decisive role to play in forging such an alliance," it says, declaring that the CPI would work for the victory of the third alternative.

The party's programme includes economic development on "self-reliant and democratic lines"; land reforms; restricting the multinationals to specific areas; jobs, education and health for all; general equality; defence of secularism; more transparency in administration; electoral reforms; and opposition to defence "link-up" with the U.S.

Replying to questions about seat adjustments, Mr. Bardhan said that the party would contest a few more seats than it did last time and negotiations were going on with its allies in different States. In UP [Uttar Pradesh] where it won only one out of the four seats it contested last time, the party is taking claim to 14 and in Bihar to 14 as against eight last time.

Sources indicated that the party might drop its sitting Lok Sabha member from Madhubani, Mr. Bhogendra Jha, and replace him with one of its senior Rajya Sabha members. A final picture, however, would emerge in the next few days.

India: Samata Party, Samajwadi Janata Party Merge

BK2903161696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission has recognized George Fernandes group of the Samata Party as the real Samata Party. The order was passed by the commission in New Delhi today after hearing the symbol dispute between the Syed Shahabuddin group and George Fernandes group of the party. According to the commission's order, status quo will be maintained regarding the party's election symbol, flaming torch, and it will remain with the George Fernandes group. The Samata Party has already been registered and recognized as a national party by the commission.

Meanwhile, the general secretary of the Samajwadi Janata Party, Mr. Satyaprakash Malaviya, has said his party and the Samata Party- George Fernandes group have merged at the national level. Talking to newsmen in Allahabad, he said the unified central parliamentary party of the two parties will meet in New Delhi on Monday to chalk out the election manifesto and finalize the list of candidates for the Lok Sabha elections.

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India: Uttar Pradesh Unit of Janata Dal Severs Links With Party

BK3003092696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Uttar Pradesh unit of the Janata Dal has severed its links with its central leadership. Announcing this at a news conference in Lucknow today, the state unit president, Mr. Ram Ashray Verma, alleged that the central leadership has formed an electoral alliance with the Samajwadi Party unilaterally against the wishes of party workers in the state. He said the faction led by him will be known as the Uttar Pradesh Janata Dal. Mr. Verma said he has taken the decision after consulting all important leaders. Replying to a question, he stated that the future course of action will be decided at a meeting of the party leaders in Lucknow tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the party's general secretary, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, has said that the Uttar Pradesh unit of the Janata Dal has been dissolved. He told AIR correspondent that the decision was taken this morning after consultations with the party president, Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav, and other senior leaders. He said the decision to forge an alliance with the Samajwadi Party in the state was approved by the National Executive and Political Affairs Committee of the party.

India: Janata Dal Facing 'Political Crisis' Following Defections

BK3003160496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Janata Dal is facing a political crisis. Five of its sitting MP's have joined the Congress-I. This was announced by the party joint secretary, Major Ved Prakash, at a press conference in New Delhi this evening. Four of them are Lok Sabha members. They are Mohammad Yunus Salim, Dr. Faidul Azam, Dr. Mumtaz Ansari, and Mr. Rajesh Kumar. The Rajya Sabha member is Mr. Dinesh Bhai Trivedi.

In another development, all the three Janata Dal members in the Delhi Assembly led by the party general secretary, Mr. Rambhir Singh Bidhuri, today quit the party and formed a new party, Janata Dal- Bidhuri, to fight the Lok Sabha elections. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi today, Mr. Bidhuri said his new party will support democratic and secular forces to defeat communal parties. He criticized the Janata Dal's alliance with the Samajwadi Party. [passage omitted]

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the Samata Party have reached an agreement on seat adjustments in Bihar for the Lok Sabha elections. While the BJP will contest 32 constituencies, the Samata Party will put up candidates in the remaining 22 seats. This was announced by the BJP leader, Mr. Ashwini Kumar, and the Samata Party leader, Miss Jaya Jetli, in New Delhi today. The Samata Party president, Mr. George Fernandes, said that BJP has agreed to leave Balia and Salimpur seats in Uttar Pradesh to his party.

India: CPI, DMK Reach Electoral 'Understanding' in Tamil Nadu

BK3103082396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CPI [Communist Party of India] and DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] have reached an understanding on seat sharing for parliamentary and assembly seats in Tamil Nadu. According to DMK press release issued in Madras, CPI will be contesting two parliamentary and 11 assembly seats in the state.

The leader of the opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, Mr. S.R. Balasubramaniam, met the DMK president, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, in Madras last night. They discussed the current political situation in the state.

India: DMK, Congress-I Faction in Tamil Nadu Election Alliance

BK3103130396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A report received just now says that the DMK [Dravida Munetra Kazhagam] and Moopanar faction of the Congress- I in Tamil Nadu have forged an election alliance. This was announced at a joint press conference in Madras by the DMK president, Mr. Karunanidhi, and Mr. G.K. Moopanar. Under the agreement, the Moopanar faction will contest 20 Lok Sabha seats and 40 assembly seats.

India: Janata Dal, Indira Congress-Tiwari Link in Madya Pradesh

BK3103162596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CPI-ML [Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist] has announced that it will contest four Lok Sabha seats in Punjab and five seats in Uttar Pradesh.

The Janata Dal will release the final list of candidates tomorrow. The party leader, Mr. Sharad Yadav, said in New Delhi today that the Janata Dal has entered into an electoral alliance with the All India Indira Congress-Tiwari in Madhya Pradesh and talks for seat adjustments in other states are under way. Mr. Yadav also announced

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the appointment of Mr. Ram Singh, a former MP, as working president of the Uttar Pradesh unit of the party. The state unit was dissolved yesterday after its decision to delink from the parent party protesting against its electoral alliance with the Samajwadi Party.

India: Ministers React to Congress-I Vote Alliances in Tamil Nadu

BK0104075096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Moopanar group of the Tamil Nadu Congress-I has formed an electoral alliance with the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam]. The announcement of the alliance was made in Madras by Mr. Karunanidhi and Mr. Moopanar. Under the agreement, the Moopanar group will contest 20 Lok Sabha and 40 Assembly seats. A report from our news desk:

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording, in progress] ... Karunanidhi and dissident Congress leader, Mr. G.K. Moopanar. The two leaders finalized a broad front to fight the All India Anna DMK-Congress alliance. The announcement was made by Mr. Karunanidhi at the DMK headquarters in the presence of Mr. Moopanar. Under the agreement, the Moopanar group will contest Lok Sabha and 40 assembly seats. Mr. Moopanar said that the details regarding the constituencies will be worked out soon.

Both the ministers, Mr. Arunachalam and Mr. Chidambaram, who are Moopanar supporters, held discussions in New Delhi on the developments. Mr. Chidambaram declined to comment, while Mr. Arunachalam said he will not be contesting on an All India Anna DMK alliance ticket. The Tamil Nadu Congress-I president, Mr. Kumri Anandan, has described the DMK-Moopanar tie-up as an alliance of convenience. He said the alliance will only suit the leaders and not the people. [end recording]

Latest reports say the Moopanar group has approached the Election Commission for registration of their party.

Iran

Iran: Velayati Sends Message to Primakov on Tajik Crisis

LD3003180496 Tehran IRNA in English 1741 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, March 30, IRNA — The Iranian ambassador to Moscow, Mehdi Safari, presented the oral message of the Iranian foreign minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, to the Russian deputy foreign minister, Albert Chernyshev for his Russian counterpart, Yevgeniy Primakov on the process of defusing Tajik crisis here Saturday [30 March].

In his message, Velayati told Primakov that the Islamic Republic of Iran has been uninteruptedly in contact with the opposition group which has been at war with the Tajik Government forces in Tajikistan and that Iran has succeeded in bringing about a renewed ceasefire and a relative peace in that country.

Velayati's message stated that the opposition group is still prepared to restart peace negotiation with the Tajik Government.

The Iranian foreign minister wanted Primakov to conduct preliminary negotiation with Tajik Government on the timetable and the agendas of the fourthcoming peace negotiation with the opposition group and inform him of the outcome.

The Russian deputy foreign minister told the Iranian ambassador that based on the agreement reached in Moscow between the two foreign ministers, Velayati and Primakov, negotiations are being conducted between Russia and the Government of Tajikistan. He finally added that the results of the talks will be put at the disposal of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Chernyshev hoped that the peace initiation of Iran and Russia in defusing the crisis in Tajikistan will lead to a permanent settlement of peace in that country.

Iran: Va'ezi Confers With Tajik Opposition Leaders

LD3003182796 Tehran IRNA in English 1819 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 30, IRNA — Iran's deputy foreign minister of Euro-American affairs, Mahmud Va'ezi, conferred with the leaders of union of Tajikistan's opposition leaders on Saturday [30 March].

Va'ezi expressed hope that the new year will be the year of peace and friendship in Tajikistan and strengthening of ties between the government of Iran and Tajikistan.

He hinted at the progress in political settlement of Tajikistan crisis during last year and stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran is in pursuit of peace talks.

Iran's deputy foreign minister also expressed hope that the peace talks will be resumed as soon as possible, and that the questions conducive to settlement of the crisis in Tajikistan will be studied.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry official called on the conflicting parties in Tajikistan to avert extreme stands in order to achieve a just and lasting peace.

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During the meeting Tajikistan opposition leaders stressed the constructive role of the Islamic Repulic of Iran in the peace talks and its its continued efforts in that direction and that the Tajikis always see Iran standing by their side at the time of difficulties.

The opposition leaders expressed hope that through the efforts of Iran, the U.N. and other observer countries, peace will be restored in Tajikistan.

Iran: Current Crisis in German Relations Called 'Passing Phase'

LD2903195796 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 26 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed article: "The Crisis in Iranian-German Ties is Short Term"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Javid Qorban-Oghlu, director general for African affairs at our country's Foreign Ministry, has described the current crisis in relations between Iran and Germany as a passing phase, adding: This state of affairs will not last long.

According to the Central News Unit in Beirut, speaking in an interview with AL-HAYAT newspaper, which is published simultaneously in Beirut and London, he referred to the arrest warrant issued by the German public prosecutor for Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Fallahian, Iranian intelligence minister, and said: This warrant was issued just two days after the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, which reveals the link between the two within the framework of the U.S.-Israeli policy to isolate Iran.

According to this report, Qorban-Oghlu added: This incident will not affect Iran's relations with Europe, because European countries, including Germany, France, and even Britain, learned their lesson during the Persian Gulf war — despite the extensive assistance given by these countries during the Persian Gulf war, it was only the United States that gained anything politically and economically. Europe will, therefore, not repeat this experience by implementing U.S. policies against Iran.

Iran: Commentary Views Kinkel Remarks on Bonn-Tehran Relations

LD3103160196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In an interview with the GENERAL ANZEIGER newspaper, the German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel reiterated that he is persistent in continuing the talks with Tehran, adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran is an important country located in a strategic region. Therefore, the Bonn-Tehran ties are essential.

The important point is that although there have been ups and downs in the ties of the two countries, the two had constant relations after the victory of the Islamic revolution. On the other hand, with an area of 1.8 million sq km and a population of 60 million, the Islamic Republic of Iran is located in one of the most strategic regions. Iran owns the northern coast of the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea and its resources of oil and gas places it as one of the rare countries throughout the word. The collapse of the USSR and establishment of the new republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus has enhanced the political and geographic importance of Iran.

It should be noted that the development of ties between Iran and Germany is evaluated as a negative aspect and the United States and the Zionist regime encourage the German Government to lessen its ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran, through propaganda. Political pressure to hold the ties with Tehran reached its peak when Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] performed some military operations against the Zionist regime. The United States and the Zionist regime accused Iran as a country responsible for the attacks. Further on, Klaus Kinkel reiterated that there is no evidence that Iran plays a role in the international terrorism.

The interviewer of this newspaper with the German foreign minister reveals the true understanding of the authorities of this country regarding the false accusations of the world arrogance.

Iran: Majles Speaker Calls German Arrest Warrant 'Disgraceful'

LD0204093996 Tehran IRNA in English 0920 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 2, IRNA — Majles Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri Tuesday [2 April] termed as disgraceful the arrest warrant issued by the German prosecutor's office for the Iranian Information Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Fallahian saying that the most important reason behind its infamy is its baselessness.

Speaking at the first open session of the Majles in the new Iranian year (started March 20), the speaker said that contrary to its claims, the German judiciary is a fully dependent body and acts under the influence of Zionist and American policies and issues verdicts only to appease them.

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If the judicial system of any country is to issue arrest warrants for high-ranking officials of other countries security at international scenes will lose its meaning.

"From our point of view, the German Government has directly influenced this unwise and inexperienced move of the judiciary and the German people should not tolerate the disgrace of their judicial system becoming a tool in the hands of Zionists," he told the deputies.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri also referred to the pressures exerted by the Zionists on Muslims in the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip saying that the people of the area have been besieged for almost two weeks.

Stressing that no foodstuff or medicine had reached the region over this period, he lashed out at the silence of the so-called supporters of human rights.

Emphasizing that claim of supporting human rights and campaign against terrorism is only a political game, he said, "it is regrettable for us and disgraceful for the Arab countries to witness the situation and still hold sessions with Israel on trade issues," he said.

The Majles speaker expressed hope that Islamic and Arab countries of the region will awaken soon and do stop further humiliating themselves.

Iran: Daily on Need To 'Combat' U.S. 'Domination' in Caspian Sea

NC3003124096 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 13 Mar 96 pp 1, 11

[Second and final part of two-part political commentary: "'Oil—Politics and Threats' — on the Sidelines of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Minister's Visit to the Caucasus and Azerbaijan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the first part of our article, we discussed the close link between the political and military issues of the Caucasus and Azerbaijan and the northern shores of the Caspian Sea with regard to oil issues. It was stressed that the trend of events indicates a proliferation of threats that are directly aimed at our country's national security.

In general, one should say that this trend not only threatens the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran but also of the regional countries, particularly of those that have oil-related economies that are entwined with the West. Today the Israelis and the Americans are making efforts in the northern areas of the Caspian Sea — under the guise of economics and oil companies — to transform this region into a center of insecurity for these countries in order to pave the way for the plunder of the oil wealth in the region.

Recent events indicate that in this trend of seeking dominance over the arteries of energy resources in the region, the U.S. government is using Turkey as "an intermediary," and one of its most important aims in this regard is the severance of relations between Iran and the Muslim-inhabited republics of the former Soviet Union. This would enable the West's Rapid Deployment Force to swiftly intervene in the affairs of the region. (Details of the U.S. military bases in Turkey will shortly be carried on our political pages).

The United States has instilled this impression in the newly independent oil-rich countries of the former Soviet Union that the only conduit for the transport of oil to the West is through Turkey!

In view of the plots that the United States and Israel are creating in the region and the political inexperience of the leaders of some of these newly independent countries, and their haste in squandering their national wealth to the detriment of their national security in the long term, there is no doubt that we should expect to witness greater interference by the United States and the occurrence of unforeseen political events in this part of the world.

For this reason, the most immediate and practical way of combating U.S. threats would be through genuine combined efforts by the littoral countries of the Caspian Sea to adopt individual and collective policies for the utilization of the Caspian Sea oil and for safeguarding political security and the environment.

Unfortunately, some of the littoral countries of the Caspian Sea do not take into account strategic priorities and future longterm threats in their greed for the short term interests. For example, Kazakhstan set up a consortium for the utilization of Caspian Sea oil in which the U.S. share has increased to 50 percent.

This consortium is formulating a $20 billion plan for the extraction of oil from the depths of the Caspian Sea. Turkmenistan is also drawing up a plan, in practice, for the utilization of oil from the southern part of the Caspian Sea and from the northern parts of its shores, without eliciting the concurrence of the other littoral countries. This country is simultaneously drawing up plans for the individual as well as collective utilization of Caspian Sea oil! The only principled step was taken by Ashgabat in this regard with its emphasis on the construction of a pipeline to transport its oil via Iran to the Persian Gulf.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly declared its opposition to the individual extraction of the Caspian Sea's resources in order to prevent the United States from gaining a foothold in the Caspian Sea region. In

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practice, Iran has called for a legal regime acceptable to all littoral states and for the adoption of a joint economic and security policy for the region. Such a policy would not only preserve the collective national stability and security of the regional countries; it would also be effective in expediting the principled economic development programs of the aforementioned countries.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was deprived of easy access to the Baltic and Black Seas and has reverted to its former position as it was under Peter the Great. In view of its current position and the proliferating threats that this country fears from the United States, Russia concurs with Iran in most of its stances on the Caspian Sea. This could provide the matrix for attaining a firm and principled union among the powerful countries of the region, namely Iran and Russia against the expansionism of the United States.

It is, therefore, not without reason that the Americans have not chosen any of the two routes for the transport of Azerbaijan's oil to the West, that is, through Russia or Iran and keeping in view their longterm political interests, they have chosen far more expensive routes despite them being most uneconomical.

In order to safeguard their longterm interests, Western companies opposed the passage of the pipeline through Iran on the pretext of instability in Chechnya and even rejected the use of the Caucasus pipeline in Northern Russia.

In conclusion, it may be emphasized that in order to combat the trend of U.S. domination over the oil resources of the Caucasus and Azerbaijan region, first of all, we should formulate a quick, powerful, and consistent diplomacy for the broadening of regional cooperation and multilateral relations among the littoral countries of the Caspian Sea that will have a wider scope for action.

In conjunction with this diplomacy, we should elicit the concurrence of the littoral countries in agreeing to a unified legal regime for tapping the Caspian Sea resources, and we should enlighten them of the deleterious longterm consequences of the infiltration of U.S. and Israeli influence in the region and convince them that ultimately, by adopting a unified policy with Russia regarding the Caspian Sea, they will be able to prevent the illegal individual utilization of the Caspian Sea resources by the littoral countries.

Iran: Russia To Train Iranian Engineers in Nuclear Science

LD2903174296 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 24 Mar 96 p 3

[Unattributed article: "Moscow: Russia Will Train Iranian Engineers in Nuclear Science"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Andrey Gagarinskiy, the director in charge of foreign relations at Moscow's Kurchatov science institute, has announced: Russia will be signing an agreement in the near future for training Iranian engineers in the field of nuclear science.

Gagarinskiy told ITAR-TASS last Thursday [22 March]: Russia and the Islamic Republic of Iran are currently studying the training programs to be provided for the engineers who will be putting the civilian nuclear center in Bushehr into operation.

Iranian sources have not commented on this issue so far. The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently stressed the need for making peaceful use of nuclear energy, and the relevant international organizations have repeatedly stated that Iran's nuclear programs are peaceful.

Despite these assurances, the United States and the Zionist regime have repeatedly made false claims about Iran's nuclear capability.

The plan for completing the Bushehr nuclear center in southern Iran is currently under way with the assistance of Russian experts. The center will have one light water nuclear reactor with 1,000 megawatts of power.

Iran: Commentary Disapproves of Ties Between Arab Region, Israel

LD0204120896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0959 GMT 2 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a time when the Zionist regime is making contacts and signing agreements with official authorities of the region in a bid to find a way to be accepted in the region, the people of this group of countries continue to be opposed to that regime. This opposition has prevented progress in the ties between Tel Aviv and the governments of the region, and it has forced the officials of the countries of the region to be more cautious in their contacts with Tel Aviv.

The latest case of contact between Tel Aviv and the countries of the region is the visit by Shim'on Peres, the prime minister of the Zionist regime, to Oman and Qatar. This visit, which is his first trip to the countries of the region after his appointment as the

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prime minister of the Zionist regime, is of importance within the framework of the Zionist regime's policies to extend its influence in the region.

Nevertheless, although the Labor Party is trying to publicize this trip in order to present it as a success, Peres' host countries are trying instead to keep it as quiet as possible. In this way, when the prime minister of the Zionist regime arrived in Oman yesterday, he was greeted at Salalah, the temporary residence of the amir of Oman.

On the other hand, Omani media, which reflect the views of the government of that country, have not published any reports or news about Peres' visit to Oman. Political analysts see the holding of the meeting between Omani officials and Peres in Salalah instead of Muscat, as well as the media silence in this regard, as a sign of the anxiety felt by Muscat officials about the possible reaction of the people to Peres' visit.

As to Peres' visit to Qatar, although that country's official authorities have adopted silence, opinion polls suggest that more than two-thirds of the people of Qatar are opposed to the establishment of ties between the Zionist regime and their country. In one opinion poll, carried out by a Qatari newspaper, 98 percent of the people of Qatar see the Zionist regime as an enemy and a usurper of the rights of Arabs.

In view of these indications, political analysts believe that there is a serious difference of opinion over links with the Zionist regime between the official authorities and the people of the countries of the region. Bearing in mind this difference of opinion, the closer the governments become to the Zionist regime, the more distant they become from their own people. This group of analysts believes that, in view of this distance and in view of the undeniable role played by the people in forming policies, one cannot expect a very promising future for the process of compromise [between Arab Governments and Israel] and for the ability of the Zionist regime to extract itself from its current isolation.

Iran: Foreign Ministry Spokesman Rejects 'Arafat's Claim

LD2903183096 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 24 Mar 96 p 2

[Unattributed article: "Spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran: 'Arafat's Taking Sides With the Zionist Regime Against Iran Is a Big Mistake"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran has rejected 'Arafat's claims that Iran is responsible for the internal problems of the occupied territories.

Dr. Mahmud Mohammadi spoke about the intensified cruelty that is being inflicted on Palestinian women and children by the forces occupying Jerusalem and those of 'Arafat and, expressing amazement at the fact that 'Arafat was siding with the Zionist regime against Islamic Iran, he called on 'Arafat not to make any greater mistakes.

He added: The inability of the self-rule administration to fulfill the rights of the Palestinian nation has led to the closeness of views between that administration and the Zionist forces toward putting pressure on and torturing Palestinian Muslims.

The spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran said: Were it not for the struggles of Palestinian women and children in the occupied territories and the support of the Muslims of the world for their just struggles, even the Zionist regime would never have agreed to negotiate with an organization that was watching the hardships of Palestinian Muslims from European capitals.

Iran: Revival of Soviet Union, Expansion of NATO Assessed

LD3003213096 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 25 Mar 96 p 3

[Article by A. Salaheddin: "The Revival of the Former Soviet Union or the Expansion of NATO?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Duma, one of Russia's main legislative bodies, declared a measure, on the basis of which the former Soviet Union was disbanded, null and void two weeks ago and, thereby, opened the way for a return to the past.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin is strongly opposed to this idea, but it was approved with a large majority by the Duma, in which former communists are in the majority. Although the political power and jurisdiction of the Duma is limited and, according to Russia's Constitution, the president has the greatest political power, indications suggest that in the presidential elections due to be held on 5 June [date as published], Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the Russian Communist Party and the former editor of PRAVDA, will win and, if he does, the power of the Duma on the revival of the former Soviet Union will be strengthened.

In recent days, Belarus explicitly announced, in the words of President of that Republic Alyaksandr Lukashenka, that an agreement for a new union between Russia and Belarus would be signed on 31

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March. Bearing this in mind, it can be said that part of the Duma's approved declaration has already come to fruition and its first product has been the new alliance between Russia and Belarus — even though this alliance did not come as a great surprise, because Lukashenka was basically elected as president of the Republic of Belarus on the premise that he would bring about a new union between Belarus and Russia.

A few weeks ago, a number of reporters and staff from Belarusian radio and television were visiting Islamic Iran and visited the Keyhan Institute. What was the main reason behind the interest shown by the people of Belarus in renewing the union with Russia, the visitors were asked. Was it because the period spent in the Soviet Union was particularly good or because the situation of the people of Belarus has been particularly bad since independence? It was said in reply that it was a difficult question to answer and the people of Belarus probably did not even have a proper answer themselves.

However, freedom, independence, and the other social concepts claimed by Belarus after attaining independence did not bring about any major gains for the people of Belarus. The people of that country and other Soviet republics were robbed of their past by communism in the name of golden ideals and dreams, but today capitalist invaders, more savage than ever, have descended upon those countries in the name of independence and freedom. Political and economic mafia gangs are busy pillaging. All in all, we can say that this lot is not behaving with any greater justice than yesterday's communists.

It is not only in the republics of the former Soviet Union, but also in most of the countries of East Europe, that we are witnessing the return to power, under a different name, of yesterday's communists. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, too — except Armenia — all the newly independent countries are being run by former communist leaders and, although they do not want to carry out everything dictated by the Kremlin as they did in the past, they know, nevertheless, that they must cooperate with Russia in order to remain in power.

Basically, Russia, for its part, does not wish to see its interests in former republics endangered and, if any of these newly independent republics wishes to reconsider its relations with Russia and act independently, particularly in the field of foreign policy, it risks being subjected to pressure by Russia.

Russia itself does not make a secret of this fact and states: "The political map of yesterday's Soviet Union is vitally important to me today. These places are the arena for the vitality of Russia and, although they are outside this country's political jurisdiction, they continue to be the 'near abroad.'"

A few weeks ago, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov frankly said the following in this regard: "Tajikistan is absolutely vital to Russia and we cannot disregard it by any means!" This applies to nearly all the countries that have recently gained their independence from the Soviet Union.

Yeltsin, who is apparently opposed to the revival of the former Soviet Union, has, nevertheless, asked Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to strengthen their relations with Russia even further within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In this way, Russia wishes to say the following to the newly independent countries: You are independent. You must, therefore, solve your own problems and difficulties, and your difficulties have nothing to do with me. However, the things that are in Russia's interest in your countries must definitely be preserved.

Another debate is under way in Eastern Europe. It concerns the expansion of NATO toward the East. The Baltic republics, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are expressing the desire to become members of NATO. Russia, however, based on that same idea of the "near abroad," considers these countries as its own backyard and its own vital arena. It thus objects to their membership in NATO. A psychological war is currently under way between the West and Russia over this today.

The current situation raises this question: Will the recent measure approved by the Duma about the revival of the former Soviet Union speed up NATO's program of expansion toward Russia's borders or, on the contrary, has it been the case that NATO's program of eastward expansion provoked the reaction to revive the Soviet Union?

At any rate, we must not forget that it was not only under communism that Russia had poor relations with the West; this was also the case under the tsars. Of course, there has been a pro-Western or Western tendency in Russia as well, but the majority of the Russians have always considered themselves different from and even opposed to the West, both in terms of religion (Russian Christians, unlike their Western counterparts, are Orthodox and only follow the gospel according to St. John) and in economic, cultural, and social terms. Westerners, for their part, have always belittled and denigrated Russia. Thus, there has always been a psychological war between Russia and the West, such that when Stalin's Foreign Minister Molotov was signing an agreement with Hitler's Foreign Minister Ribbentrop in 1939, one month before the start of

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World War II — thus swallowing East Europe — he is supposed to have said: "I have realized today that tsarist Russia's foreign policy was correct!"

Thus, today's events in Russia, the West, and Eastern Europe must not only be assessed in terms of current affairs... [ellipses as published]

Iran: Commentary Discusses Implications of Mad Cow Disease

NC0204105396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 2 Apr 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahead of a meeting of EU agriculture ministers the British minister of agriculture ruled out the possibility of the ban on beef imports from the United Kingdom being lifted.

Intense talks involving the British Government, the EU's Agricultural Commission, and the agriculture ministers of the 14 other EU members started yesterday. The British Government, which initially described the crisis over mad cow disease as sensational, eventually announced that it was ready to slaughter 4 million of its 11 million cattle within five to six years. By slaughtering 15,000 cattle over 30 months each week the British Agriculture Ministry hopes to regain consumer trust. Beef contaminated with mad cow disease infects the consumer, killing him soon after contamination.

Latest reports indicate that the Taiwanese Government said blood units recently imported from America were contaminated with mad cow disease. Although the disease started in Britain, many countries have taken precautionary measures and have ceased beef imports from Ireland, Italy, and France in addition to imports from Britain. If what has been reported in Taiwan is confirmed, blood units used in blood banks in various countries will have to have special quarantine measures, since, despite the standards they claim, the Western countries usually do not adopt the necessary precautionary measures when exporting these items.

In the past few years there have been at least two very clear examples of this. After the Chernobyl incident and the leakage of radioactive material and rays from the power plant's reactors, there was widespread contamination of agricultural and animal breeding materials, especially in northern Europe. Although north European countries claimed they had destroyed all the contaminated items, several importing countries recorded cases of poisoning and disease stemming from the use of such items. The head of France's blood bank, who negligently issued orders for the export of blood contaminated with the AIDS virus, was recently tried and condemned.

These two examples show that the alertness of the importing countries and their serious stand on refraining from suspicious sales will aggravate the crisis [as heard]. Even if the EU partially lifts the ban on British beef imports, this area of British and European exports will suffer a lack of consumer faith for some time.

Iran: Majles Passes Bill on Free Trade Zone Administration

LD0204113396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning the Majles in its first open session in 1375 [began 20 March], passed the single-urgency bill on the amendment of the law concerning the administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran's free trade and industrial zones. Our correspondent reports:

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] According to this bill, the exchange system of the free trade zones is a floating one and the exchange parity of Iran's rial against other foreign currencies will accord to the conditions of the free market and will be based on supply and demand. The entry of foreign currency from zones to the main territory is free and the exit of foreign currency, in any form, from the main territory to the trade zones is subject to the regulations of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the transfer of foreign currency between the free trade zones and other countries is free.

Also, the setting up of Iranian banks, Iranian and foreign nonbank credit establishments, and the opening of branches of foreign banks in the free trade zones will be possible at the suggestion of the Free Trade Zone Organization and endorsement of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Central Bank once the Cabinet approves the relevant regulations. [end recording]

Iran: Speaker on Taxes, Elections, Liberalism at Majles Session

LD0204112296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Today at the first open Majles session in the year 1375, 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, the Majles speaker, expressed gratitude for the clear and explicit guidance and advice issued by His Eminence Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, the eminent leader of the

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revolution, in his New Year message and expressed the hope that all officials, government departments, and people throughout the country would follow this guidance and make this advice their motto.

The Majles speaker referred to parts of the New Year message of the eminent leader and spoke of the need for everyone to pay greater attention to preserving the country's public wealth and national resources in all fields. He also stressed the need to avoid profligacy and waste and to pay greater heed to conservation and the [proper] use of public property.

He also noted the eminent leader's advice about performing useful and constructive tasks and added: We must all work in such a way that we are not only useful and constructive, but also pave the way for the people's needs to be met efficiently.

Nateq-Nuri also spoke about the issue of applying a proper method for collecting taxes and, noting the importance of this for the country's economy, he explained: Departments in charge of collecting taxes must adopt a very serious approach, in this regard, toward people who have vast amounts of wealth.

The Majles speaker said: Addressing society's essential concerns, including the issue of young people and their problems, was one of the points raised by the eminent leader. We must act in this regard with greater sensitivity than ever before so that, God forbid, the values and principles of the Islamic revolution do not fade away.

Nateq-Nuri also referred to the importance of the second round of elections for the fifth term of the Majles, saying: The people must take the second round of the elections very seriously as they did the first. He said: As the eminent leader stated, they [the people] must send those people to the Majles who are capable of defending the principles of Islam and its luminous commands; not people who wish to shake the pillars of Islam in this country in the name of liberalism and freedom. [passage omitted]

Iran: New Political Group's Objectives Examined

NC0104135896 Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian 5 Mar 96 pp 3, 14

[Interview with Tehran Mayor Gholam Hoseyn Karbaschi, member of the "Servants of Construction" [Kargozaran-e Sazandegi] group by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [HAMSHAHRI] What was the motive behind the formation of this group?

[Karbaschi] The answer to this question requires examining several specific points.

For all those who have to do with executive affairs in one way or another, the need for a more active presence by the country's executive officials, who are well-versed in the topic of reconstruction in one of the most vital political and social arenas—that is the Majles and elections—was the first motive.

Throughout the last 17 years, the people have played a role in the elections and made a point with their votes. Moreover, the factions that had a role in introducing people and programs felt they had the right to play a role in something so sensitive as the elections and the composition of the Majles, and they did so. But as far as the executive officials were concerned, because of their rank, until now a group with a common goal to solve executive problems either did not exist or was at a low level.

We have seen how in the Majles, despite discussions and debates on bills, generally those people who play a part in the deliberation and approving of bills refer to the executive management only as a specialized view or invite them to participate in one session, without granting these officials the opportunity to play a more tangible role. This applies especially to plans. At least bills go through a phase of specialized study by the government. But this was sometimes not the case with plans.

Under the conditions of reconstruction, possible differences in outlook between the legislative and the executive branches may create problems. The legislator looks at the matter from one angle and the executive management from another. And this interrupts and delays matters.

I feel a vast group of officials and persons truly involved in the country's executive affairs have been sincerely and silently working since the outset of the revolution, each in a different position, and they have easily moved from one position to another whenever asked, never expressing their serious views on decisions and political issues such as the elections.

It can be said that throughout this [17-year] period, they have been suppressed. On one hand, they faced high expectations for the solution of the country's problems and, on the other, their views did not carry any weight in destiny-making issues such as the Majles. On the contrary, the decision makers have been groups that may not have had any serious impact on the current reconstruction issues, and even special [illegible] political circles in the universities, which do have any good views to offer and can carry out fine specialized activities, but

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are not very aware of subtle executive issues and are not involved in executive affairs.

Until now, it was well accepted for such non-executive groups to express a view on issues. But a very extensive body, which plays a key role in the country and is formed of sympathizing people who are serving the revolution and working for the country's development, were unable to express their views on the formation of such a major and important institution [the Majles]. And this is what sparked an unpleasant feeling among this group of people.

Meanwhile, the Majles, which is the active body of legislation and should generally have a clear view on executive issues, faced the serious problem of the absence of the necessary feel for executive issues when approving laws and regulations. And even before a law was implemented, either changes were immediately made or it was completely rewritten.

Laws are usually ineffective when there are shortcomings in legislation. This is something that can be amended by detailed executive views.

In short, the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of the country should work toward the implementation of law and serve the people, be it in the economic, cultural, industrial, agricultural, or social fields.

The fact that a line is sometimes drawn, which cannot be infiltrated, is not acceptable. Laws are made so that they will be able to guide the officials during their implementation. If there is a distance between laws and the implementation of laws and these are two completely separate issues, they will never be able to yield favorable results. Under the current conditions in the country, where there is an exceptional opportunity to achieve a faster reconstruction and for the implementation of the system's goals— social justice, economic and social achievements, and the victory of Islam—we need to concentrate all our strength in the direction of reconstruction.

It is important when we carry out the country's reconstruction. After time, a series of projects and activities may be implemented. But projects can only be economically justified if they are implemented within a specific period.

With the most optimistic of estimations we have 15 years and with the most pessimistic, 10 years, before our oil production equals our consumption. From then on, we will be an oil-importing country and it will be impossible for us to use our oil income to invest in the country.

We cannot lose opportunities. The country's development and progress should be achieved within this time limit, so that we can build the necessary infrastructure in the fields of services, industry, communications, and all other such fields, which the country needs in order to free ourselves from economic dependence. We should envision a period of between 10 to 15 years for all our programs.

Therefore, one of the objectives of our group is to heed the fact that all forces should be concentrated, in the time we have at our disposal, to work toward reconstruction.

This is a need the Majles and executive body should understand in a coordinated way, so that we will not slow down because of frictions and so our forces will not become involved in possible misunderstandings or fail to profoundly understand issues.

[HAMSHAHRI] What decisions do you have on the future of your group?

[Karbaschi] This group was actually formed on the basis of needs at this juncture, after the views of elders were sought. All of them encouraged this group to be formed, especially during these elections.

Fortunately, this forecast turned out to be correct, and our movement became a group to include everyone's presence in the elections.

As for the future, definitely this idea will not cease to exist, either in the form of the current group or another. After all, the idea is correct and everyone should take it—and will take it—into consideration. If it is necessary for this idea to be followed up within the framework of one group, then this will definitely be the case.

We do not feel ourselves a "political group" seeking to become involved in "political activities." We only acted because of the need at this juncture to mobilize all forces to participate in the elections and to form an active Majles, including all forces that are working toward the country's reconstruction and progress.

We think this goes beyond the duties of a specific group and that it calls on all forces to participate in this vital issue for the country. This the basic point our group makes, and not the point of bringing a specific group to Majles or helping a group dominate or gain power. But if we believe it will need to be voiced within the framework of a specific group, then we may do so. However, we have still not reached this conclusion.

[HAMSHAHRI] The publication of the statement by the Kargozaran group was widely welcomed by and gave rise to enthusiasm, especially among the educated strata.

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What is your assessment of the basis and roots for this enthusiasm?

[Karbaschi] Yes, it is precisely the belief in reconstruction, saying we can actually reconstruct the country instead of being affected by the enemies' propaganda and being at a loss because of our problems and saying "nothing can be done" and "we are a Third World country," that gives rise to many opportunities and possibilities. This is a plague that should be stopped.

The outlooks that should rule the fifth term of the Majles should be based on plans and programs. Such outlooks will help the Majles and its deputies not fall into the trap of the problems of specific regions and districts. If problems are not studied on a national level, the solution of problems faced by one district or one region will only be temporary and may create problems in other districts or regions. [passage omitted]

Also, there are cultural, social, education, and other problems in the country that have not been solved and should be examined by the Majles. And it is with such outlooks that the fifth Majles can solve problems and create a strong economy and a healthy and active society.

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: 'Mysterious Disease' Kills 111 in Bajura, Achham Districts

BK2903132596 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 28 Mar 96

[Report by "a POST reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, March 27 — A mysterious disease has claimed 111 lives in the hilly districts of Bajura and Achham.

Confirming the 18 deaths in Achham, MP Bhim Bahadur Rao of constituency No 1 said, "the symptoms starts with cough, cold and fever, but the disease has not been identified yet."

Although he claimed to have notified the concerned departments about the disease, no steps have yet been taken in the matter.

The residents of the districts have named the disease "Maad" — which in their language means common disease with symptoms of cough, cold and fever.

Although the authorities of the districts have denied their knowledge of the existence of the disease, an employee at the Bajura District Education Office, Padam Bahadur Shahi confirmed 22 deaths in Kailashmando VDC [village development committee].

Secretary of Health, Ghana Nath Ojha said he has not received any reports so far, but remarked one or two deaths in the summer months were common in the area.

Another resident of Bajura, Ram Bahadur Thapa, who returned to Kathmandu this week said the number of deaths have been increasing in the villages and children and elderly people had the least chance of survival from the disease. According to Thapa, the only treatment available so far are the witch doctors.

Nepal: Prime Minister Affirms Recognition of PRC Rule in Tibet

BK0104135096 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 1 Apr 96

[RSS report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, March 31 — Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has said Nepal's foreign policy is unequivocal on matters concerning the Tibet autonomous region of China and Nepal has been recognizing Tibet as an inseparable part of China.

At a meeting with the delegation of Editors' Society Nepal that was about to leave on a visit to China today, Prime Minister Deuba made it clear that "no change has been made in our policy concerning Tibet nor will be made in the future."

"We are committed not to allow any anti-China activities to take place on Nepalese soil," he added.

It may be recalled that police force was used against some people who recently tried to stage a demonstration here in protest against the alleged human rights violation in China and the organizers were arrested.

Noting that Nepal and China share a common Himalayan culture and enjoy a very close and traditional friendship, the Prime Minister said the friendship between the two countries is ever growing on the basis of the principles of Panchsheel [Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence].

He underlined the need to promote bilateral trade between Nepal and China so as to further strengthen their traditional relationship in the changed global context.

"The governments of Nepal and China are exploring the areas of cooperation that will benefit both the peoples," Deuba said.

"All necessary home work is being done to make his [as received] forthcoming visit to China fruitful and successful," he said.

Asking the journalists to take his message of best wishes and warm friendship to the people and government

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of China, Prime Minister Deuba expressed the view that the exchange of visits between Nepal and China has contributed to the promotion of bilateral relations between them.

The delegation of Nepalese journalists leaving for China on April 2 will be headed by president of Editors' Society Nepal Govinda Biyogi.

Other members of the delegation are adviser at the Communications Ministry Tara Baral, Pushpa Raj Pradhan (People's Review), Kedar Koirala (Purbanchal Khabar), Paban Thapa Kuntal (Kalantar), Rajendra Bahadur Shrestha (Prajatantra) and Rajendra Sharma (Gorkhapatra).

The journalists visiting China at the invitation of the press and publication administration of China will visit Lhasa, Wengdu, Beijing and Senzhen cities.

Bhutan: Dissidents Said To Consider 'Armed Movement'

BK3103115596 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 31 Mar 96

[Report by "a POST reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jhapa, March 30 — After waging a peaceful protest movement in vain, there are now signs that Bhutanese dissidents could just be beginning to lose their patience.

BCDM [Bhutanese Coalition for Democratic Movement], the umbrella body that brings together Bhutan's main political parties under a single roof, has stated that the ongoing Appeal Movement has made no impression whatsoever on the autocratic regime of Bhutan.

The BCDM today met here at Birtamode to chalk out its strategy for an armed movement against the Bhutanese government. Political activists, human rights groups and refugees from all eight refugee camps in Jhapa and Morang took part in today's meet.

Meanwhile, in another significant development today, the Appeal Movement launched by the AMCC [Appeal Movement Coordination Council] has decided to review its policy. Most important in its agenda is to seek greater support for the Bhutanese cause from the international community. Sources say efforts are on to lobby the United States and get the US government to issue a statement as the one released by the European Parliament recently.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Prime Minister Writes to Opposition Leader Offering Talks

BK0104135696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto sent a letter to the leader of the opposition, Mian Nawaz Sharif, offering him to hold a meeting to promote cooperation for the security and prosperity of the country. In her letter, she referred to the speech in the National Assembly on 26 March where he had made an unconditional offer of turning the Supreme Court verdict [on appointment of judges] into a basis of longer cooperation. She concluded in her letter by saying she looked forward to meeting him to discuss his offer at a mutually convenient date.

Pakistan: UN Official in Geneva Briefed on Kashmir Killings

BK0204054796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0500 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan's representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Mr. Munir Akram, has briefed the high commissioner for human rights and chairman of the commission on human rights regarding the grave situation in occupied Kashmir following the murder of human rights activist, Mr. Jalil Andrabi, and killings of innocent Kashmiris. The high commissioner for human rights expressed deep concern over the tragic events in the held valley, particularly the killing of Mr. Andrabi. He said he would look into the situation and investigate the matter to determine responsibility for this outrage. Mr. Munir Akram also handed over to the high commissioner for human rights a copy of the resolution of the Pakistan National Assembly over the killings in occupied Kashmir along with condemnatory statements issued by OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] and Amnesty International.

Pakistan: Senator Comments on Indian Actions in Kashmir

BK0104140396 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Announcer] India is pursuing a very calculated policy to crush the struggle of the Kashmiris. We have in our studios today Senator Shafqat Mahmud, member of Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator, what is your perception of the current scenario?

[Mahmud] The Indian design in Kashmir has been clear for some time, and that is to cow down the Kashmiris

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and if possible eliminate the Kashmiri leadership. This was a cold, calculated murder which was committed on these people near the Hazratbal shrine. What is very clear is that there was an understanding with these people when they were asked to leave the Hazratbal shrine. But this understanding was broken and they were deliberately lulled into being there and then at night in a very cold and barbaric manner the house was attacked and it was razed to the ground. In fact it was burnt. In fact, many of the bodies were burnt beyond recognition.

So before that was the killing of Mr. Jalil Andrabi a day earlier. Before this, many other attempts at either intimidating, harassing, arresting Kahsmiri leadership.

The design is very clear that India cannot get the Kashmiri people to accept elections in Kashmir, and therefore this is an attempt to cow them down, to further suppress them, to further unleash barbarities so that the Kashmiri people willy-nilly accept the Indian grand designs of having elections in Kashmir. The second is that with the Indian elections coming near, the idea is to try and impress the Indian electorate that this government is willing and ready and able to commit as many barbarities as any other Indian political party. So therefore, these two objectives are served by this cold blooded killings of Kashmiris.

[Announcer] Thank you, Senator.

Pakistan: Report of U.S. Training Indians on Orion Aircraft Viewed

BK3103105296 Karachi JASARAT in Urdu 29 Mar 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Well Done, America"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to a news report, the U.S. Navy is providing the Indian Navy with complete information and training about the Orion P3C sea vigilance airplane. The purpose of providing this training and information is to train the Indians in how to defeat the operations of this airplane. The significant aspect of this report is that the Orion P3C aircraft will be supplied to Pakistan soon under the Brown Amendment.

According to the report, after receiving this information, the Pakistani Navy advised the government not to acquire this aircraft. The kind of dishonesty the United States has resorted to regarding its agreement to supply arms to Pakistan is unprecedented. Secrecy is always a basic component of commercial contracts, and in deals for defense equipment secrecy becomes even more important. Not only does the United States believe in secrecy, but it has been pressing others to observe this principle. At one point, when there was a rumor that Pakistan had transferred F-16 technology to China, the United States expressed a very strong reaction. The above mentioned report, however, proves that the United States follows a double standard in this regard. There is no doubt that the United States is an extremely unreliable country.

Pakistan: Activities of Indian Embassy in Washington Questioned

BK3103104496 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 31 Mar 96 p 10

[Editorial: "Objectionable Attitude of Indian Embassy in Washington"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The issue of supplying Pakistan with military equipment worth $368 million that it either sent to the United States for repair or bought a few years ago remains undecided. The U.S. Administration has clearly said that this equipment will be supplied to Pakistan. Meanwhile, anti-Pakistan senators have initiated a move in the Senate to cancel the Brown Amendment. They think Pakistan has acquired nuclear technology and equipment from China in violation of Pakistan's pledge to the United States not to make any advances in its nuclear program that conflict with U.S. nuclear nonproliferation policy. Senator Pressler, who strongly opposed the Brown Amendment, is the main force behind this new move. This time he has won the support of a few more senators, and some in Washington think that Pakistan will have to work even harder to foil this new move to annul the Brown Amendment.

All the anti-Pakistan lobbies have gathered in Washington and are trying very hard to annul the Brown Amendment. It should not be surprising to us that the Indian Embassy in Washington is not only encouraging these efforts but is playing the role of coordinator. Enmity with Pakistan is the primary goal and objective of Indian foreign policy. The Indian Embassy has gone so far in its hostility toward Pakistan that it has disregarded or violated all diplomatic etiquette and norms. It has resorted to tactics unknown in the world of diplomacy. The Indian Embassy in Washington sent a message (demarche) to the U.S. Administration saying that because China supplied ring magnets to Pakistan, economic sanctions should be imposed on Pakistan. The U.S. State Department has taken strong notice of this Indian initiative. It has told officials in the embassy that whether or not China supplied new equipment to Pakistan and whatever measures the United States and concerned countries might take in response, India should refrain form interfering. The U.S. State Department has advised the Indian Embassy to refrain from interfering in internal U.S. matters. It is clear that this move by the Indian diplomats goes against diplomatic norms. This

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reveals that India has lost all sense in pursuit of its enmity toward Pakistan.

Meanwhile, it has been learned that Indian Foreign Ministry officials in New Delhi have tried to ascertain from the U.S. Embassy what the impact would be if the Indian Government pressured the United States to impose economic sanctions against Pakistan because of the alleged acquisition of ring magnets from China. It is said that the U.S. ambassador to India informed the Indian Foreign Ministry that any such proposal or action would be strongly rejected by the U.S. Government and that India should not take such a step. Some believe that the letter the Indian Embassy in Washington sent to the State Department was approved and cleared by the Indian Foreign Ministry, but sources in the Indian Foreign Ministry have not confirmed this report.

Regardless of whether the Indian Embassy in Washington took this step on its own or received covert instructions from its Foreign Ministry, this is a highly condemnable act. The response of the U.S. Government is logical and commendable. The Pakistani Government should take serious notice of the move initiated by Senator Pressler and should try to counter the efforts aimed at annulling the Brown Amendment. The only black woman senator, who supported Senator Hank Brown on the Brown Amendment, has advised the Pakistani Government of a few things in view of this situation. Our government should seriously consider these points. We hope that the Pakistani Embassy in Washington and Pakistani citizens in the United States will launch an organized campaign as they did during the passage of the Brown Amendment.

Pakistan: Bhutto on 'Tragic Consequences' of India's Nuclear Test

BK0204103896 Islamabad THE NATION in English 2 Apr 96 p 8

[Editorial: "Tragic Consequences?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, addressing the Formation Commanders of the Pakistan Army, talked about some important security problems and some security-related problems confronting the country. At the top of the list was of course, the much-talked-about Indian plan for conducting a second nuclear test, as also its development of nuclear-capable missiles. Among the security-related issues is the civil war in Afghanistan, where India as well as some others, were trying to fish in troubled waters. The prime minister laid the blame for that situation on the unwillingness of Prof Rabbani to honour the commitment he had made to his fellow Mujahideen about the transfer of power. But obviously, it was the security climate in the Subcontinent that was of paramount concern to her audience, requiring a clear enunciation of policy. The main consideration for the formulation of our defence strategy is the length to which India is prepared to go in acquiring a nuclear arsenal and perfect a delivery system for it. India has already perfected the delivery system through the production of a substantial number of Prithvi missiles. What it wants to do now is to update and modernise the nuclear weapon itself. And it is about that world opinion in general and the U.S. in particular, is concerned. India has so far been adamant in the pursuit of its nuclear goals and has been resisting U.S. pressure in respect of various nuclear non-proliferation goals, beginning with the NPT [nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] and going on to the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] and other international treaties.

Ms Bhutto said that if India went ahead with its plans about the nuclear test it would lead to tragic consequences. She chose not to spell them out but one obvious consequence of that would be that Pakistan would either have to conduct a nuclear test of its own or be prepared to accept the nuclear blackmail of India. Although the prime minister did not elaborate on the nature of the tragedy likely to befall this part of the world, the implication of a drift towards a catastrophic war, was hard to resist. The question then is: whether anything is being done about it? Do we have a matching response to the threat of the use of unconventional weapons by India. The answer to that is important because of the rapidly-deteriorating situation in Kashmir. The development of unconventional weapons by India is apparently also aimed at achieving certain long-term strategic and diplomatic goals such as a recognition by the world of India's status as a mini-superpower, a permanent seat in the UN Security Council for it and an acknowledgement by the U.S. of India's role as the regional policeman, etc. But the immediate short-term goal is to overawe Pakistan to make it abandon the cause of Kashmir. The Indian perception being that once Pakistan was out of contention, India would be able to annex Kashmir through a massive genocide of the Kashmiri people, leaving the world as a silent spectator. The prime minister should take the nation into confidence about the measures being taken to foil this attempt by India.

Pakistan: 'Sources' Preview Defense Equipment Talks With U.S.

BK0104110596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 1 Apr 96 p 12

[Report by Shakil Shaikh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Pakistan-United States defense talks on the Program Management Re-

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view (PMR) begins in Washington from Tuesday [2 April] with stormy discussion on the accounting discrepancies in several areas.

"We are going into the dialogue for settling down accounts and to get approved a firm delivery schedule of the shipment of Pakistan owned and paid-for equipment under the operation of the Brown Law", said official sources.

Though one member of the Pakistan defense team has already reached Washington in advance before the high-ranking official talks kick off on April 2, the other members departed from Islamabad Saturday night.

The defense delegation will be headed by Secretary Production Mazhar Rafi. It will include Additional Secretary Defense Major General Jamshed Malik, one representative each from the three services, program officer of the Foreign Military (sales) Financing [FMF] and two other junior officers.

In all, the Pakistan side will be comprising 12 members, including Pakistan Ambassador to the United States, Dr Maleeha Lodhi, Defense Attache and other officials working in the Pakistan mission.

However, on the US side there will be more than two officials who will participate in these talks, which will continue for 72 hours.

"We are not fully satisfied with the military equipment and the money announced by the United States Defence Department, as there are several accounting discrepancies," said official sources. They said these discrepancies will be sorted out in the sub-group meetings.

Following the preliminary session, the two sides would agree to form sub groups on each of the three services. These groups, said officials, will hold a threadbare item-wise discussion.

According to highly-placed sources, there are several items which Pakistan does not require because of their being obsolete nature.

Several items are not required by the Pakistan armed forces given the expiry of their shelf-life.

"We have the option of seeking the return of our money in place of these items, besides asking the United States to close cases of the FMF still not closed despite default of delivery on the part of Washington," said official sources. They sources are optimistic that the US side will unfold the delivery schedule of equipment, if all goes well.

These officials say Pakistan might also raise the issue of repayment of its money against several items which the forces do not need, or such money as the US had charged for want of completing a routine exercise. Under this, they said, fall items of withdrawn naval ships and money charged on training etc.

Pakistan experts will also look into the shelf-life of each and every item before okaying the delivery of these items. Instead, according to the sources, Pakistan will ask for money paid for these types of equipment.

The biggest question will be the case of P-3C naval aircraft which now require upgradation. "No doubt there are several items which can be adjudged as junk, but some are really required by the forces," said officials privy to an exercise which the Defense Production had undertaken before the talks.

A recent report in a section of the American press revealed that besides $368 million military hardwares, the United States may also pay $120 million in cash to Pakistan because of its complicated accounts.

It is also expected that Pakistan would ask for repayment of $658 million plus $199 million which it had paid directly or through credit facility for the 28 (17 plus 11) multirole F-16s.

All efforts on the part of Defense Department have failed to invoke interest of any country to buy these F-16s, basically for two reasons: price of per copy and older version aircraft (F-16 A/B Block).

Since the Brown Law does not allow delivery of these aircraft to Islamabad, Pakistan may seek repayment of the amount paid for.

However, nothing is clear as to which way the F-16 game will turn, but for the present it would be better for Pakistan to ask for return of money, with interest. This view is held supreme in all the discussions that have so far taken place, but nothing is better than to have the aircraft.

The implementation of the Brown Law, said officials, will allow training and professional education programs for military officers on bilateral basis.

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